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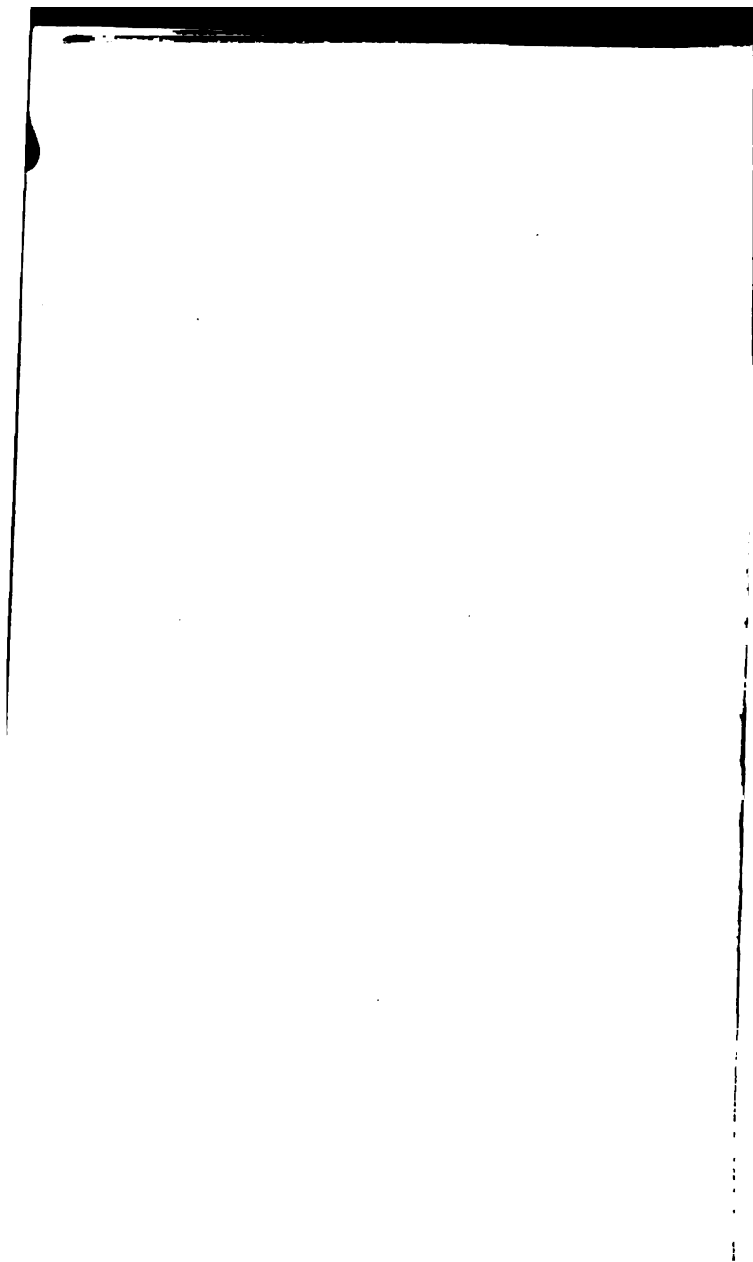


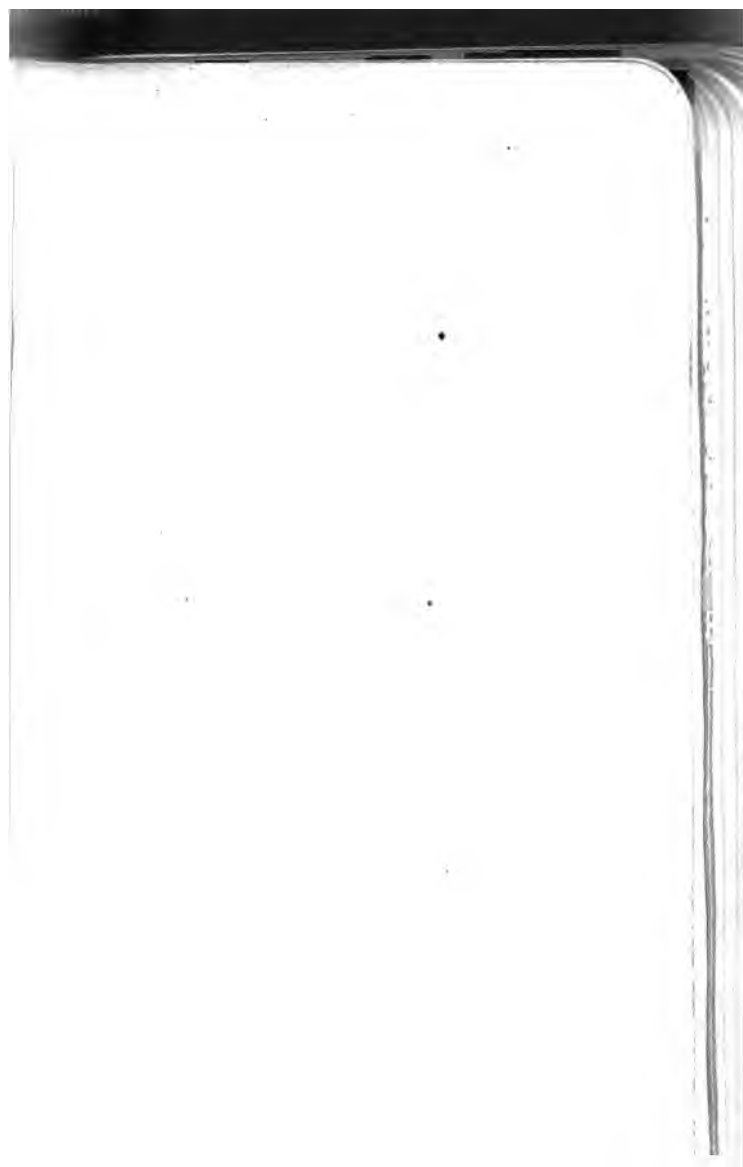
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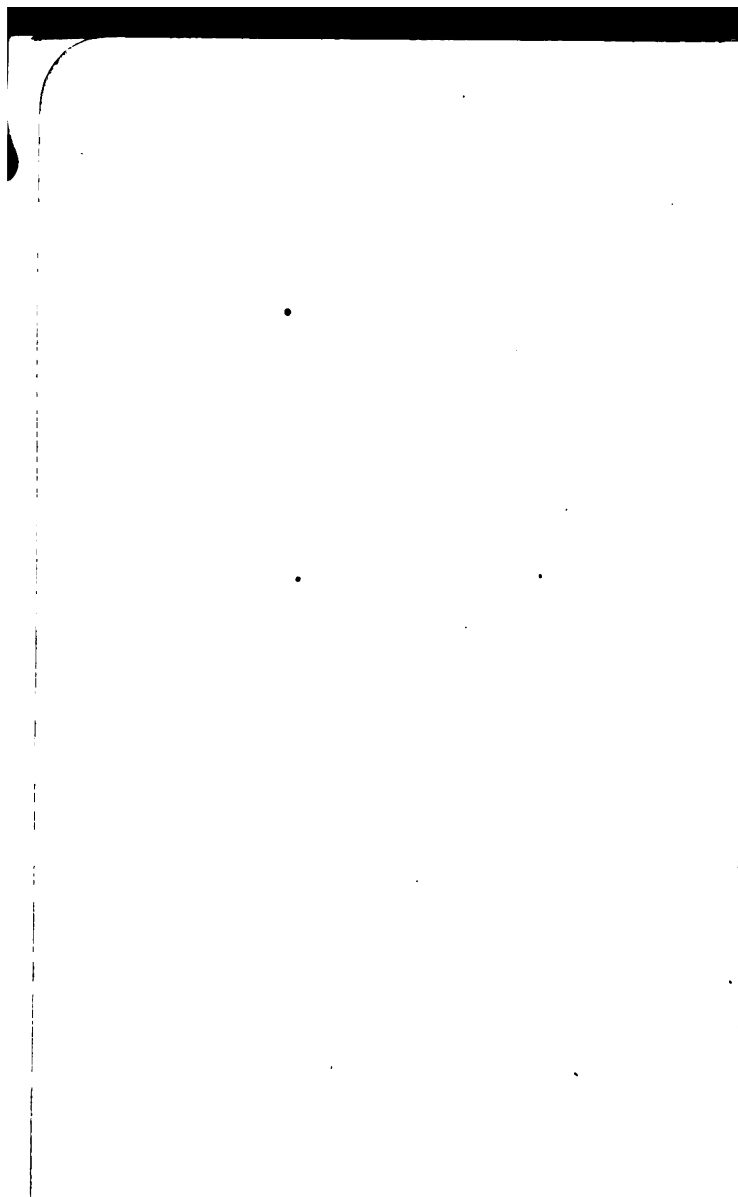












The Comforter

A COMPILATION

BY

THOMAS EDWARD POTTERTON



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EUGENE F. ENDICOTT
BOSTON

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Preface



It is the hope of the compiler, that this little book may supply the need of a pocket-manual, consolatory in nature and especially adapted for use at funerals.

The title of the volume, "The Comforter," has been a guide and standard in the adaptation of Scripture passages and the selection of poems.

The compiler has taken advantage of other compilations in arranging this hand-book, trusting, that by good selection and wise elimination, "The Comforter" may be of value to the clergyman or layman conducting a funeral service, and a means of "rich consolation" to the bereaved.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the kindness of friends and authors for assistance rendered.

The prayers were written by Rev. I. M. Atwood, D.D.; Rev. Henry Blanchard, D.D.; and Dean Henry P. Forbes, D.D.

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Preface

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The poems by Whittier, Lowell, Longfellow, Alice Cary, Sill, Harriet Beecher Stowe, A. D. T. Whitney, Burroughs, and Mrs. E. S. P. Ward, are used by permission of, and by special arrangement with, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., publishers of their works.

THOMAS EDWARD POTTERTON.

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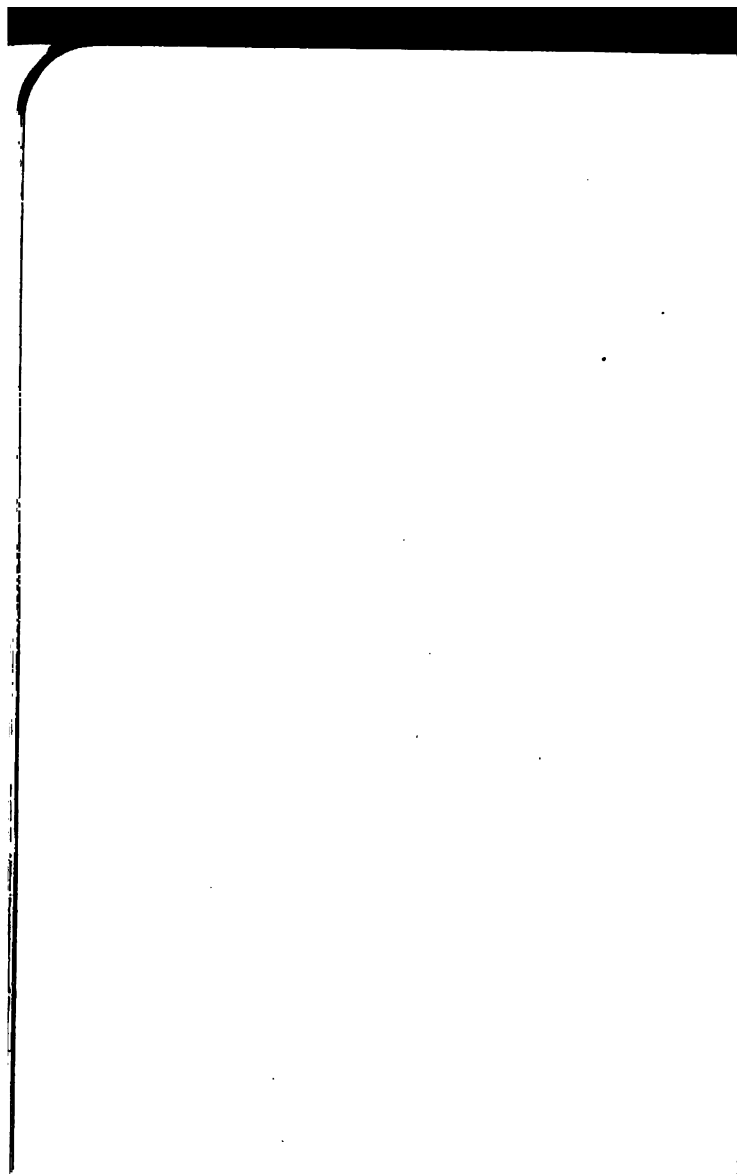
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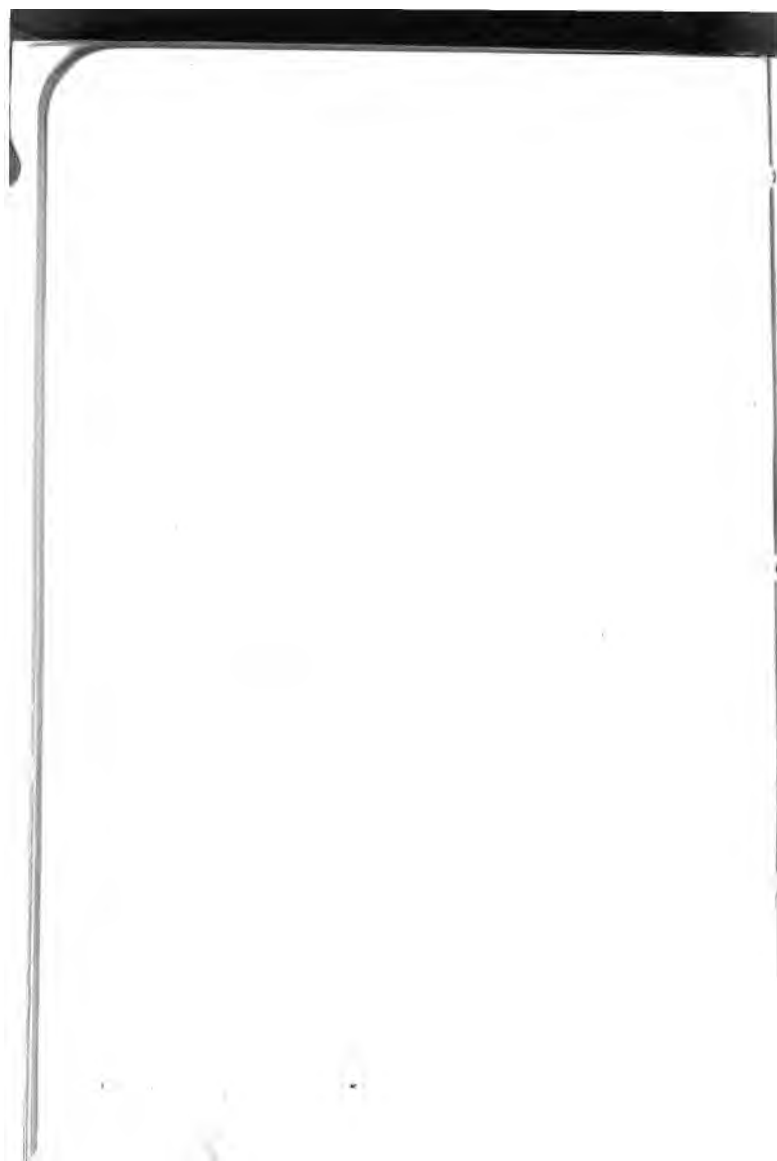
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Opening Sentences



Opening Sentences



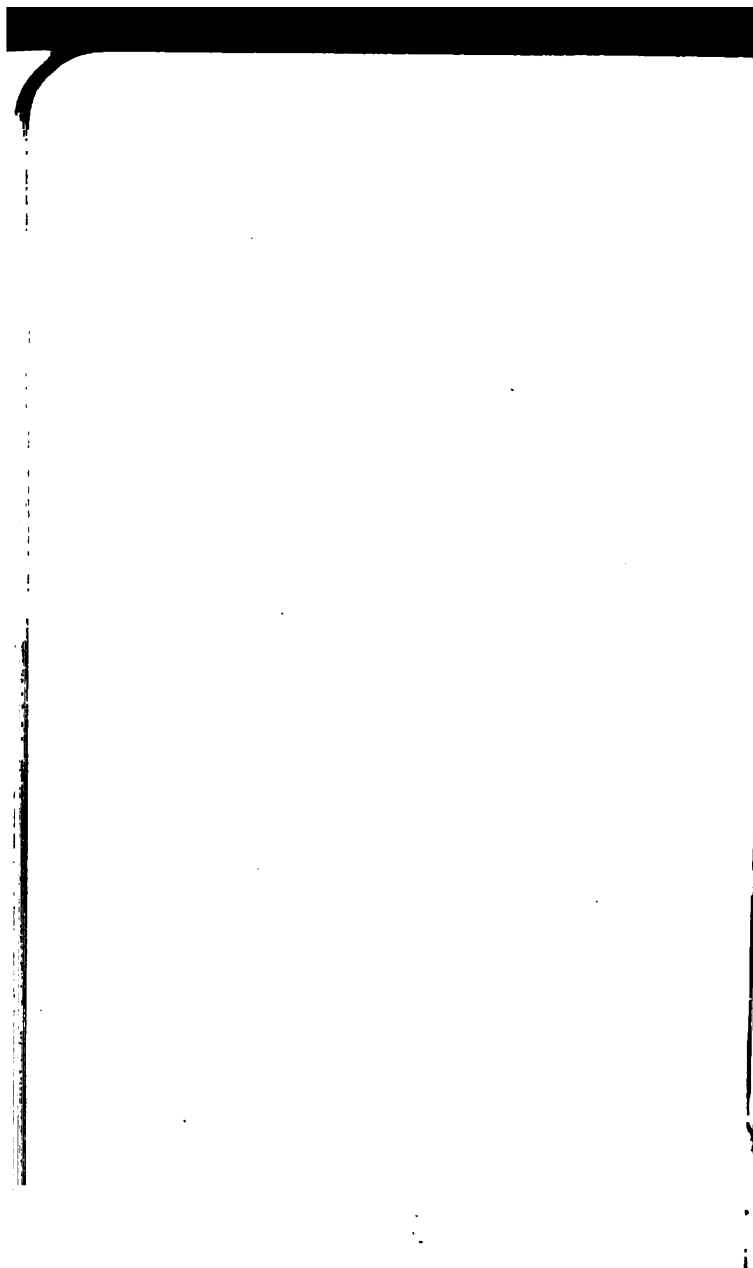
I AM the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord Jesus Christ : he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die [St. John xi. 25, 26].

We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out.

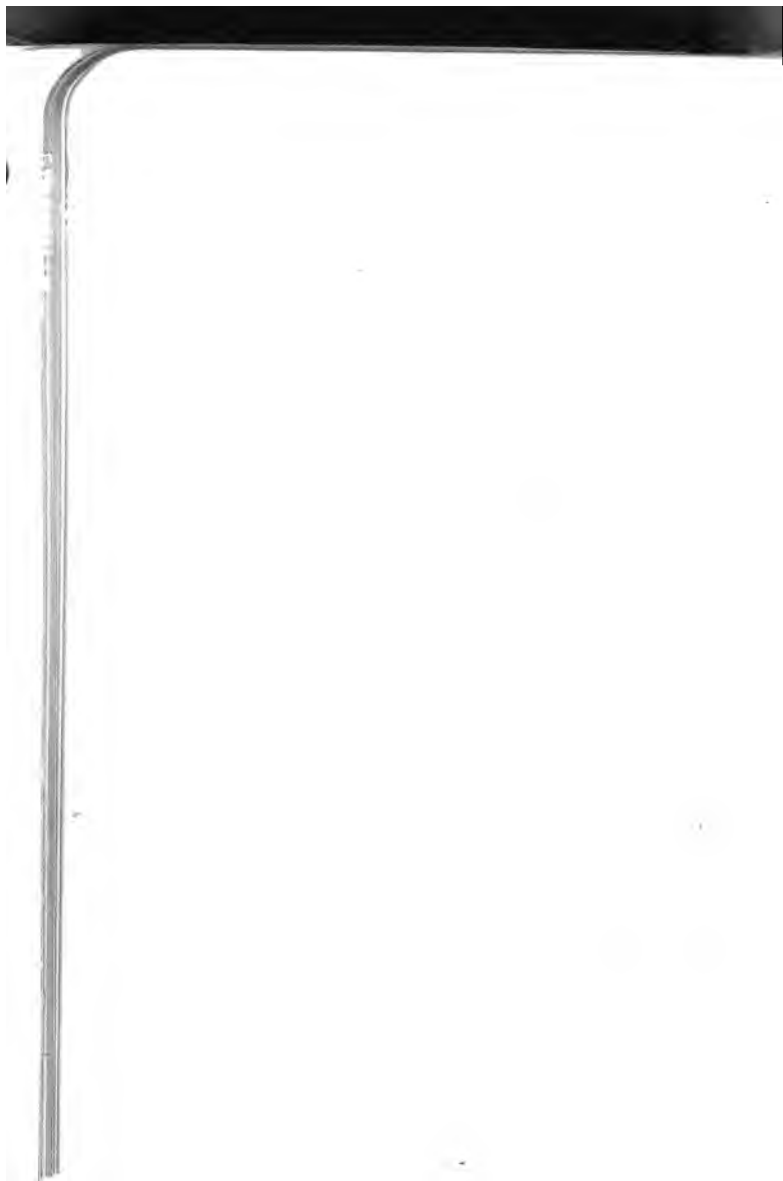
The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away : blessed be the name of the Lord [1 Tim. vi. 7 ; Job 1-21] .

All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass.

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth ; but the word of our God endureth forever ; [1 Peter i. 24, 25].



Scripture Selections



A General Service



To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: a time to be born and a time to die.

ECCLESIASTES iii.



LORD, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth. We spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may re-

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joyce and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us : and establish thou the work of our hands upon us ; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

PSALM xc.

LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is ; that I may know how frail I am. Behold, thou hast made my days as a handbreadth ; and mine age is as nothing before thee : verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Surely every man walketh in a vain shew : surely they are disquieted in vain : he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them. And now, Lord, what wait I for ? my hope is in thee. Deliver me from all my transgressions : make me not the reproach of the foolish. I was dumb, I opened not my mouth ; because thou didst it. Remove thy stroke away from me : I am consumed by the blow of thine hand. When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth : surely every man is vanity. Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear unto my cry ; hold not

Scripture Selections

thy peace at my tears : for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.

PSALM xxxix.

The Lord is my shepherd ; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures : he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul : he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil : for thou art with me ; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies : thou anointest my head with oil ; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life : and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

PSALM xxiii.

Bless the LORD, O my soul : and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits : who forgiveth all thine iniquities ; who healeth all thy diseases ; who redeemeth thy life from destruction ; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies ; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things ; so that thy youth is

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renewed like the eagle's. The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.

PSALM ciii.

Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order : Christ the first-fruits ; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

— But some man will say, How are the dead raised up ? and with what body do they come ? That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die : and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain : but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh : but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial : but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars ; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in

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incorruption : it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory ; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power ; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul : the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural ; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy ; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy : and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God ; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ? The sting of death is sin ; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved breth-

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ren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

I CORINTHIANS XV.

Let not your heart be troubled : ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions : if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever ; even the Spirit of truth ; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him : for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless : I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more ; but ye see me : because I live, ye shall live also.

ST. JOHN XIV.

I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us. For eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. Our light

Scripture Selections

affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory ; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen ; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous ; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby. The trying of your faith worketh patience. Submit yourselves to God, and the Lord will raise you up. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creatures, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

SELECTIONS.

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth : for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away ; and there was no more sea. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Be-

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hold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

REVELATION xxi.

And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

REVELATION xxii.

Tribute to a Child



AT the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

MATTHEW xviii.

And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall

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not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

MARK x.

Thus saith the Lord ; a voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping ; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. Thus saith the Lord ; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears : for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord ; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy.

JEREMIAH xxxi.

When David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead : therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead ? And they said, He is dead. Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped : then he came to his own house ; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat. Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done ? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive ; but when the child was dead, thou didst arise and eat bread. And he said, While the child was yet

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alive, I fasted and wept : for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live ? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast ? can I bring him back again ? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

2 SAMUEL xii.

Behold, the Lord God will come with a strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him : behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd : he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom.

ISAIAH xl.

Patience and Confidence



BE patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts : for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Murmur not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned : behold, the judge standeth before the door. Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering, affliction, and patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord ; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy [Jas. v.]. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end : that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises [Heb. vi.]. Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof :

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and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.

ECCLESIASTES vii.

Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him : for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons ; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not ? Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence : shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live ? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure ; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous : nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

HEBREWS xii.

Hast thou not known ? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary ? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint ; and to

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them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall : but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength ; they shall mount up with wings as eagles ; they shall run, and not be weary ; and they shall walk, and not faint.

ISAIAH xl.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea ; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her ; she shall not be moved : God shall help her, and that right early. Be still, and know that I am God : I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us : the God of Jacob is our refuge.

PSALM xlv.

I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress : my God ; in him will I trust. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night ; nor for the arrow that flieth by day ; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness ; nor for

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the destruction that wasteth at noonday. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. PSALM xci.

Behold I come quickly ; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his works shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

REVELATION xxii.

Comfort of Sorrow



It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting : for that is the end of all men ; and the living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter : for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning : but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider : God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him.

ECCLESIASTES vii.

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

2 CORINTHIANS i.

For the whole world before thee is as a little grain of the balance, yea, as a drop of the morning dew that falleth down upon the earth. But thou hast mercy upon all ; thou lovest all the

Scripture Selections

things that are, and abhorrest nothing which thou hast made : for never wouldest thou have made anything, if thou hadst hated it. And how could anything have endured, if it had not been thy will ? or been preserved, if not called by thee ? But thou sparest all : for they are thine, O Lord, thou lover of souls. WISDOM xi.

The Lord is my light and my salvation ; whom shall I fear ? the Lord is the strength of my life ; of whom shall I be afraid ? Though a host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear : though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after ; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion : in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me ; he shall set me up upon a rock. When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up. Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path. I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

PSALM xxvii.

If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you

The Comforter

another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

JOHN xiv.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

PSALM xxiii.

The Aged



REMEMBER now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them ; while the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain : in the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, and the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and one shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low ; also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail : because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets. Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was : and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

ECCLESIASTES xii.

The Comforter

The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree : he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age ; to shew that the Lord is upright : he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

PSALM xcii.

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. Thou carriest them away as with a flood ; they are as a sleep : in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth and groweth up ; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth. The days of our years are three score years and ten ; and if by reason of strength they be four score years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow ; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. O satisfy us early with thy mercy ; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and

Scripture Selections

the years wherein we have seen evil. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us : and establish thou the work of our hands upon us ; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

PSALM xc.

Return unto thy rest, O my soul ; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.

PSALM cxvi.

The Immortal Life



LET not your heart be troubled : ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions : if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest ; and how can we know the way ? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life : no man cometh unto the Father but by me. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you : not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. JOHN xiv.

As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear ; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God : and if children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ ; if so be that

Scripture Selections

we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

ROMANS viii.

But some man will say, How are the dead raised up! and with what body do they come? That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain: it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain: but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body. All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial

The Comforter

bodies, and bodies terrestrial : but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars ; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption : it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory : it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power : it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural : and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy : the second man is of heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy : and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God ; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

Scripture Selections

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

I CORINTHIANS xv.

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

I CORINTHIANS ii.

For we know that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 CORINTHIANS v.

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Be-

The Comforter

hold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

REVELATION xxi.

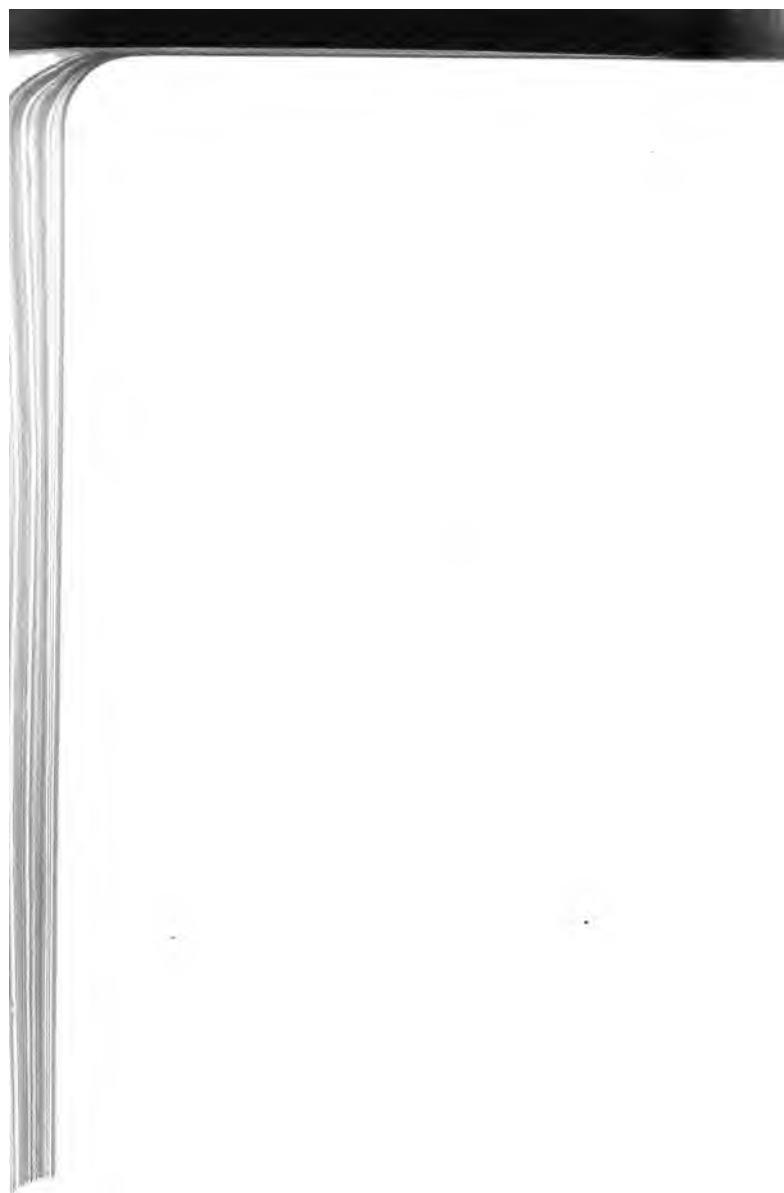
I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors: and their works do follow them.

REVELATION xiv.

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

REVELATION vii.

Prayers



Prayers



WE are driven to seek Thee again, as so often before, O our Father, by our affliction. We come with confession on our lips, and not without shame, that in our long bright days of health and comfort we are so little mindful of our duty and our debt to thee. But now, O God, turn us not away, when, made sensible of our need of thee, we come, praying for help to bear a burden too great for us.

Death and darkness have fallen upon us ; but with thee there is no death, and with thee is everlasting life. Grant that we here to-day, in the presence of a messenger we all dread, yet all must meet, may be taught how to come into thy light, and so have in our disturbed souls somewhat of the Peace of God that passeth understanding. Teach us, O God, that as thou art owner of all worlds, thy child is ever at home with thee. And if in our depressed mood of this hour, smitten with a heavy stroke, bewildered with mystery, and throbbing with the pain of parting, we cannot lift up our hearts in full and rejoicing faith, grant, O merciful Father, that we be not overwhelmed with our

The Comforter

grief, or made unmindful of thy great goodness in the precious treasure which we mourn as lost. Trembling under the shock, may we have strength and wisdom still to stretch out our hands to thee and feel the touch of infinite tenderness and help.

We thank thee, O Lord, for all pure and useful lives, however short. They have enriched the world, they have made us all debtors, they have laid up treasures for us in heaven. And in the large light of our Christian faith we dare to give thee thanks for every life thou hast commissioned, even of the unthankful and the evil. For our Divine Master has taught us that thy love reaches to the wayward, the sinful, and the lost. And the unspeakable gratitude that rises in our hearts when we think of this thy great kindness to the frailest of Thy children, we take, O God, to be but a faint echo of the emotion of love and pity and eternal goodness in the infinite heart. So we bow to thy will and way, our Father, as wiser and better than our own, and pray in this sad funeral hour to be gathered up, all of us, the mourners and the neighbors and the strangers, in a common assurance and a common sentiment of hope and faith and love.

In his name that is above every name, Amen !

I. M. A.

Prayers

Author of life, and Father of our spirits, in the presence of the old, old fashion of death, of whom shall we seek for succor but of thee? Though we make daily acquaintance with death, and know it is reserved for us all, we shrink from it; and when it invades our homes we are stricken and helpless. We turn to thee, O God, our Father, in this dark and bitter hour. Surely, our hearts say, there must be a refuge and help for us in our great extremity. Hitherto we have found it in the bosom of God, and now again we fly to the Divine shelter. Pity us, O our Father, and open thy mercy to us that we may find comfort and peace!

We thank thee for our life and the throng of fair, sweet things it has brought with it. We thank thee for those dear lives in which we have invested our love, whose presence is joy, whose absence is pain. We thank thee that we have had the comfort of ministering to them and the rapture of sharing their love. Though we feel now the unspeakable bereavement of loss and separation, intensified by the silence and mystery that have so suddenly fallen on our beloved, we are glad that thou gavest him (her) to us, and that we are forever the richer for the gift. As we stand here in this great shadow, we feel, O Lord of Life and Glory, a mystic sense of the eternal bond that

The Comforter

unites us with those we call dead. Give us, O our Father, the strong assurance that it is not a dream or an illusion, but a voice of truth and consolation speaking in our souls from thee.

We commit ourselves once more to thee, thou Life of our life, in the faith and fellowship of the dear old Gospel of Jesus Christ, in which death is abolished and life and immortality brought to light. May our surrender be so sincere and so complete that we shall feel the clasp of the everlasting arms. Bear with us all, O God, in our weakness and our wavering ; and be especially near with thy strong support to the members of this stricken family. Comfort with them, their kindred and friends. Awaken within all who are touched by this sorrow, or are exercised by any emotion of sympathy or any foreboding of ill, a deep, sweet sense of the overshadowing love and care of God, and a desire to be at one with thee, both for the life that now is and that which is to come.

And unto thee be praise and thanksgiving,
world without end. Amen ! I. M. A.

O thou all-merciful One ! who has taught us through the radiant faith of Jesus to call thee our Father and bring our wishes and petitions before thee in the trustful spirit of little children, help us with humble and believing hearts

Prayers

to bow before thee and take the accents of prayer upon our lips.

From out the overshadowing mystery thou hast reached down unto us the cup of sorrow and bidden us to drink.

Grant us that measure of the heavenly vision which shall not only enable us to see that it is, indeed, thy hand and not another's, but, behold as well thy face of loving wisdom, that we may say: "This also cometh from the Lord, his holy will be done."

Deliver us from the folly of measuring all thy providences by the changeful and misleading standards of our own preferences or seeming good. Vouchsafe unto us the uplift and the calm of a Christian hope that we may keep before us "the eternal years," and so walk on with steps that never falter.

Make quick the sorrowing spirit to sunder the "things temporal" from the "things eternal," that it may feel no sense of poverty when the visible and the transient fade away.

Preserve our souls from the vain assumption that our private welfare or happiness is thy sole care, that we might forget the weal and bliss of the glorified in the stress of our personal loss and earthly deprivation.

Grant that our grief and sorrow may not become nourishment for our selfishness, that we

The Comforter

should feed our souls with the unsatisfying bread of idle memories or vain repinings and regrets.

May we not hold our loss so near our sorrowing eyes that it shall shut from us the beauties and the duties that cheer and ennoble life, but lift it aloft in the clear atmosphere of faith until it shall take its place in the ceaseless procession of thy benefactions, sun-kissed and glorified.

Make ready our chastened souls for every loving service ; and teach us thus that our lives can be made richer by their seeming losses if only grief shall swing open the gates of heavenly sympathy and the angel of a new-born love bid us enter in.

So may no happy by-gone years bind shackles upon our feet, that we should not go on unto the good that awaits us. Memory opens the door into the rich treasure-galleries of recollection, doubly sacred now, and we are tempted to linger and gaze and gaze again while without love and duty call us to some useful and noble service.

So with clarified vision and cleansed hearts may we await thy further pleasure, thou lover of our souls ; grateful for the good thou hast given us in the companionship of our beloved ; calmed even unto a sober joy by the thought of their eternal gain ; the furnace fire of our sor-

Prayers

row forging new links for love's golden chain that binds the quick and the dead together that it may lift at last our souls unto our own and unto thee; to whom, thou living God of the ever-living, be glory and dominion forevermore. Amen.

H. P. F.

In this solemn hour, it is blessed for us, dear Father, to feel that Thou art with us. We can repeat the words of our beloved elder brother, "And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." Like him, our helper, may we be able to rise into that triumphant mood in which he was able to say, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." We believe that he is alive elsewhere: we believe that Thou didst receive that spirit. For to us it would seem immeasurable tragedy for Thee to have created him with passionate desire to reach his fellow-men and bring them into assurance of immortality, if Thou hadst intended to thrust him into nothingness when the body died upon the cross. We believe that he lives and loves and waits. We believe his words, "Because I live, ye shall live also." And in this hour it is unspeakably blessed to hear Thy spirit bearing witness with our spirits that we are Thy children, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.

The Comforter

May the light of that world where now he lives shine in this house to-day! May these mourning ones see his radiant face and hear his voice of comfort! May they see the face of the beloved one so recently translated to the higher world. So may the darkness of this hour of affliction be illuminated by the glory of the spirit world!

In this hour may they think of reunion in heaven between the beloved and those who have gone before. It is natural, it is inevitable, that they should dwell upon separation from themselves. Oh! may they think of the joy of those who have been reunited. We do not wish to believe that the beloved one is without sorrow in leaving the loved on earth — that the glory into which he has entered has put away all pain of parting, but we do wish to think of what strength to bear has come, now that he knows how true it is that these light afflictions which are but for a moment are not worthy to be compared with the glory into which the departed have passed.

Upon all the mourning ones let this glory rest. Let faith in Thee and in immortality give them peace! May the members of this family group be more closely bound together by this sacrament of sorrow. May they say "The Lord gave, and the Lord has suffered to go away, — blessed be the name of the Lord." Upon all

Prayers

relatives present and absent may thy peace descend! Upon all these loving friends gathered here to show their sympathy and affection and esteem, let Thy benediction rest. Oh God! may all of us feel the solemnity of life—the certainty of death—our accountability for the use of privileges and powers! May we lay hold on Eternal Life here and now! May we love Thee and obey Thee and trust Thee and co-work with Thee! May we love and honor and follow the dear Lord and Master! May we honor Thy day of worship and meditation and aspiration! May we co-work with Thy Church Universal and do our part to establish Thy kingdom in the earth!

May the angel of Death speak to our souls the truth that they who are still by our sides may be summoned to go hence before us. May we be glad to speak the word and do the deed it will be so blessed for us to remember that we have spoken and have done, when they shall have gone away, not waiting for the transfiguration which Death shall give, but having now the transfiguration which love itself bestows!

May we see that it is as natural to die as it is to be born—that we needs must die that we may put aside the mortal and be clothed upon by the immortal—that Death has entered the world by Thy ordination—by Thy love and not

The Comforter

by Thy wrath — by Thy forethought and not by Thy afterthought — that, therefore, it must be for the best.

And now, dear Father, let Thy grace be with these beloved as they shall bear away this sacred form out of which the spirit has departed. Be with them in that most solemn moment when it shall seem to them as if they were parting from their dear one. Speak then, oh Father, Thy comforting word that he is not there — that it is but the dust that returns to dust — earth to earth — ashes to ashes — while the spirit has winged its flight to Thee. Be with them in the homes where they dwell. If it be Thy will that they who have been with us in the tabernacles of the flesh may be permitted to draw nigh in spirit, grant that their spiritual presence may be felt. If it be not Thy will, then may they know that by the power of memory and of love, these beloved ones shall oftentimes be with them still, so that, in many a moment, it shall seem to them as if again they saw their faces and as if again they heard their voices.

And may the dear Master stand by their side ! May they see the radiance of his beloved face — may they hear the music of his voice — may they hear his blessed, blessed words — may they penetrate to the depth of their blessed meaning — may they live evermore under the

Prayers

power of their benediction, as he declared, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. Because I live, ye shall live also. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you: Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid!"

And unto Thee, dear Father, Eternal Spirit, in whom we live and move and have our being, give we the praise, and ascribe we the power, the glory, the majesty, the dominion, forevermore. AMEN.

H. B.



Service at the Grave



Service at the Grave.



MAN that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and hath much trouble. He cometh up, and is cut down, like a flower ; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay.

In the midst of life we are in death : of whom may we seek for succor, but of Thee, O Lord, in whom our souls do rest and hope ?

We must work the work of Him that sent us while it is day ; the night cometh in which no man can work.

From henceforth, blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord, even so saith the Spirit ; for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.

A Hymn may be sung here, or after the prayer.

The Committal.



Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God to take unto Himself the soul of His child, we therefore commit the body to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, in the confident assurance of a resurrection to immortal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ ; who overcame death and opened to all men the life of the Spirit ; according to the mighty working, whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself.

OR THIS.

Forasmuch as the spirit, created in the image of God, hath returned unto Him who gave it, we therefore commit the body to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, looking to a more glorious body and a continued life beyond ; and trusting in the blessed faith and assurance of our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, who hath brought life and immortality to light, and opened to all men the life of the Spirit.

Then shall be said :

I heard a voice from Heaven, saying unto me, Write, From henceforth blessed are the dead who die in the Lord : even so saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labors.

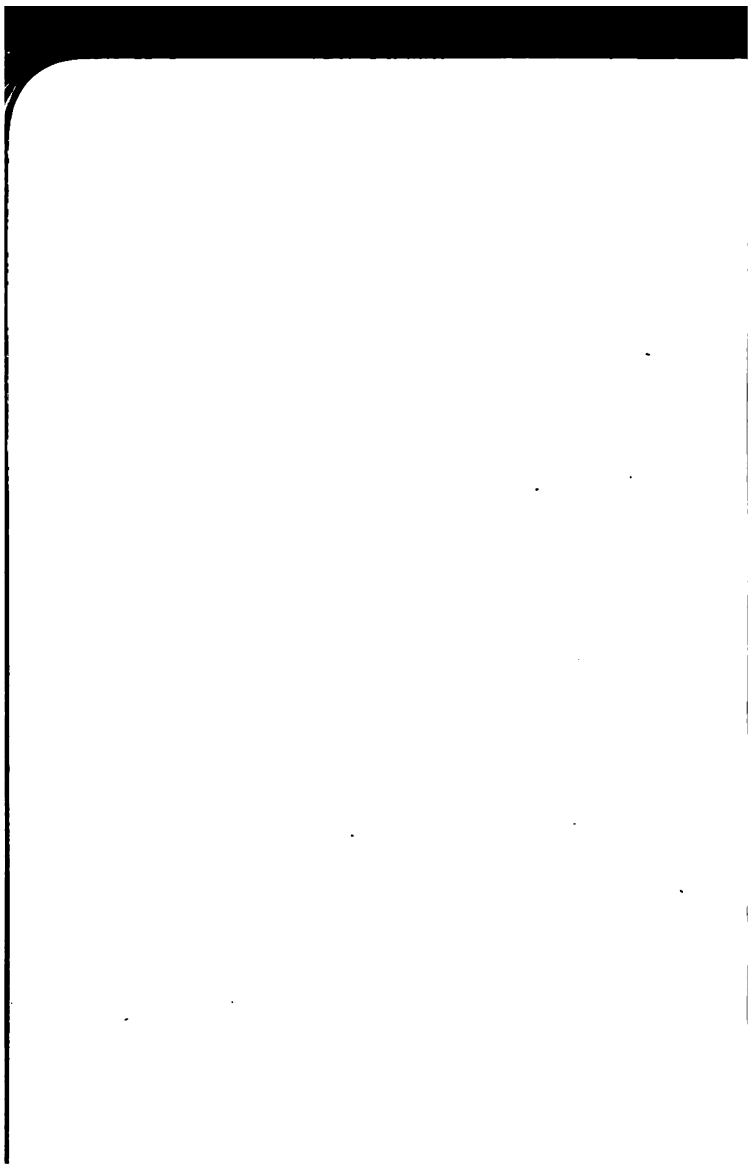
Service at the Grave

Then the Minister shall say one or both of the following Prayers at his discretion:

Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of those who depart hence in the Lord, and with whom the souls of the faithful are in joy and felicity; we give Thee hearty thanks for the good examples of all those Thy servants, who, having finished their course in faith, do now rest from their labors. And we beseech Thee, that we, with all those who are departed in the faith of Thy holy name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, in Thy eternal and everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
AMEN.

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. AMEN.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. AMEN.



Poems



Poems



Invocation.



ANSWER me, burning stars of night !
Where is the spirit gone,
That past the reach of human sight
As a swift breeze hath flown ?
And the stars answered me : " We roll
In light and power on high ;
But, of the never-dying soul,
Ask that which cannot die."

O many-toned and changeless wind !
Thou art a wanderer free ;
Tell me, if thou its place canst find
Far over mount and sea ?
And the wind murmured in reply :
" The blue deep I have crossed,
And met its barks and billows high,
But not what thou hast lost."

Ye clouds that gorgeously repose
Around the setting sun,
Answer ! have ye a home for those
Whose earthly race is run ?
The bright clouds answered : " We depart,
We vanish from the sky ;
Ask what is deathless in thy heart
For that which cannot die."

Speak, then, thou voice of God within,
Thou of the deep, low tone !

The Comforter

Answer me, through life's restless din —
Where is the spirit flown?
And the voice answered: "Be thou still!
Enough to know is given:
Clouds, winds, and stars their part fulfil —
Thine is to trust in Heaven."

MRS. HEMANS.



The Secret of Death.



"SHE is dead," they said to him. "Come away;
Kiss her and leave her, thy love is clay."

They smoothed her tresses of dark brown hair;
On her forehead of stone they laid it fair;

With a tender touch they closed up well
The sweet, thin lips that had secrets to tell;

And over her bosom they crossed her hands, —
"Come away," they said, "God understands."

But he who loved her too well to dread
The sweet, the stately, the beautiful dead,

He lit his lamp, and took the key,
And turned it. Alone again, — he and she.

Then he said, "Cold lips and breast without breath,
Is there no voice, no language of death?"

"See now, I listen with soul, not ear:
What was the secret of dying, dear?"

"O perfect dead! O dead most dear!
I hold the breath of my soul to hear.

Poems

"There must be pleasure in dying, sweet,
To make you so placid from head to feet !

"I would tell you, darling, if I were dead,
And 'twere your hot tears upon my brow shed.

"You should not ask vainly with streaming eyes,
Which of all death's was the chief surprise."

Who will believe what he heard her say,
With a sweet, soft voice, in the dear old way ?

"The utmost wonder is this: I hear,
And see you, and love you, and kiss you, dear ;

"And am your angel, who was your bride,
And know that, though dead, I have never died."

EDWIN ARNOLD.



After Death in Arabia.



HE who died at Azan sends
This to comfort all his friends :

Faithful friends ! it lies, I know,
Pale and white and cold as snow ;
And ye say, " Abdallah's dead ! "
Weeping at the feet and head.
I can see your falling tears,
I can hear your sighs and prayers ;
Yet I smile and whisper this, —
" I am not the thing you kiss.
Cease your tears and let it lie :
It *was* mine, it is not I."

The Comforter

" Sweet friends, what the women lave,
For the last sleep of the grave,
Is a hut which I am quitting,
Is a garment no more fitting,
Is a cage from which, at last,
Like a bird my soul hath passed.
Love the inmate, not the room, —
The wearer, not the garb, — the plume
Of the falcon, not the bars
Which kept him from those splendid stars.

" Loving friends ! be wise, and dry
Straightway every weeping eye, —
What ye lift upon the bier
Is not worth a wistful tear.
'Tis an empty sea-shell, — one
Out of which the pearl is gone ;
The shell is broken, it lies there :
The pearl, the all, the soul, is here.
'Tis an earthen jar, whose lid
Allah sealed, the while it hid
That treasure of his treasury,
A mind that loved him ; let it lie !
Let the shard be earth's once more,
Since the gold shines in his store !

" Allah glorious ! Allah good !
Now thy world is understood ;
Now the long, long wonder ends ;
Yet ye weep, my erring friends,
While the man whom ye call dead,
In unspoken bliss, instead,
Lives and loves you ; — lost, 'tis true,
By such light as shines for you ;
But in the light ye cannot see
Of unfulfilled felicity, —
In a perfect paradise,
And a life that never dies.

Poems

"Farewell, friends! Yet not farewell:
Where I am, ye, too, shall dwell.
I am gone before your face
A moment's time, a little space.
When ye come where I have stepped,
Ye will wonder why ye wept;
Ye will know, by wise love taught,
That here is all, and there is naught.
Weep awhile, if ye are fain:
Sunshine still must follow rain;
Only not at death, — ~~for death~~,
Now I know, is that first breath
Which our souls draw when we enter
Life, which is of all life centre.

"Be ye certain all seems love,
Viewed from Allah's throne above;
Be ye stout of heart, and come
Bravely onward to your home!
La Allah illah Allah! yea,
Thou Love divine! Thou Love away!"

He that died at Azan gave
This to those who made his grave.

EDWIN ARNOLD.



Dying.



PASSING out of the shadow
Into a purer light;
Stepping behind the curtain,
Getting a clearer sight;

The Comforter

Laying aside a burden,
This weary mortal coil
Done with the world's vexations,
Done with its tears and toil ;

Tired of all earth's playthings,
Heartsick and ready to sleep,
Ready to bid our friends farewell,
Wondering why they weep ;

Passing out of the shadow
Into eternal day, —
Why do we call it dying,
This sweet going away ?

ANONYMOUS.



The Dead.



THE dead are like the stars by day,
Withdrawn from mortal eye,
Yet holding unperceived their way
Through the unclouded sky.

By them, through holy hope and love,
We feel in hours serene,
Connected with a world above,
Immortal and unseen.

For Death his sacred seal hath set
On bright and bygone hours ;
And they we mourn are with us yet,
Are more than ever ours ; —

Ours by the pledge of love and faith,
By hopes of heaven on high ;
By trust triumphant over death,
In immortality.

BARTON.

Poems

Our Dead.



NOTHING is our own ; we hold our pleasures
Just a little while, ere they are fled :
One by one life robs us of our treasures ;
Nothing is our own except our Dead.

They are ours, and hold in faithful keeping,
Safe forever, all they took away.
Cruel life can never stir that sleeping,
Cruel time can never seize that prey.

Justice pales ; truth fades ; stars fall from heaven ;
Human are the great whom we revere :
No true crown of honor can be given,
Till we place it on a funeral bier.

How the children leave us : and no traces
Linger of that smiling angel band ;
Gone, forever gone ; and in their places
Weary men and anxious women stand.

Yet we have some little ones, still ours ;
They have kept the baby smile we know,
Which we kissed one day, and hid with flowers,
On their dead white faces, long ago.

Is Love ours, and do we dream we know it,
Bound with all our heart-strings, all our own ?
Any cold and cruel dawn may show it,
Shattered, desecrated, overthrown.

Only the dead hearts forsake us never ;
Death's last kiss has been the mystic sign
Consecrating Love our own forever,
Crowning it eternal and divine.

The Comforter

So when Fate would fain besiege our city,
Dim our gold, or make our flowers fall,
Death, the Angel, comes in love and pity,
And, to save our treasures, claims them all.

ADELAIDE A. PROCTER.



Waiting by the Gate.



BESIDE a massive gateway built up in years gone by,
Upon whose top the clouds in eternal shadow lie,
While streams the evening sunshine on quiet wood and lea,
I stand and calmly wait till the hinges turn for me.

The tree-tops faintly rustle beneath the breeze's flight,
A soft and soothing sound, yet it whispers of the night ;
I hear the wood-thrush piping one mellow descant more,
And scent the flowers that blow when the heat of day is o'er.

Behold, the portals open, and o'er the threshold, now,
There steps a weary one with a pale and furrowed brow ;
His count of years is full, his allotted task is wrought ;
He passes to his rest from a place that needs him not.

In sadness then I ponder how quickly fleets the hour
Of human strength and action, man's courage and his power.
I muse while still the wood-thrush sings down the golden
day,
And as I look and listen the sadness wears away.

Again the hinges turn, and a youth, departing, throws
A look of longing backward, and sorrowfully goes ;
A blooming maid, unbinding the roses from her hair,
Moves mournfully away from amid the young and fair.

Poems

O glory of our race that so suddenly decays !
O crimson flush of morning that darkens as we gaze !
O breath of summer blossoms that on the restless air
Scatters a moment's sweetness, and flies we know not where !

I grieve for life's bright promise, just shown and then with-
drawn ;
But still the sun shines round me : the evening bird sings on,
And I again am soothed, and, beside the ancient gate,
In the soft evening sunlight, I calmly stand and wait.

Once more the gates are opened ; an infant group go out,
The sweet smile quenched forever, and stilled the sprightly
shout.

O frail, frail tree of Life, that upon the greensward strows
Its fair young buds unopened, with every wind that blows !

So come from every region, so enter, side by side,
The strong and faint of spirit, the meek and men of pride.
Steps of earth's great and mighty, between those pillars gray,
And prints of little feet, mark the dust along the way.

And some approach the threshold whose looks are blank with
fear,

And some whose temples brighten with joy in drawing near,
As if they saw dear faces, and caught the gracious eye
Of him, the Sinless Teacher, who came for us to die.

I mark the joy, the terror ; yet these, within my heart,
Can neither wake the dread nor the longing to depart ;
And, in the sunshine streaming on quiet wood and lea,
I calmly stand and wait till the hinges turn for me.

BRYANT.

The Comforter

Passing Away.



THE fragrance of the rose,
Whose dewy leaves in morning's light unclose,
Goes not more sweetly up
From its rich heart, as from an incense cup,
Than thy freed spirit from its earthly shrine
Passed with the still angel to the rest divine.

Oh, no ! Thou didst not die !
Thou hast but lain the soul's frail vesture by,
And soared to that pure height
Where day serene is followed by no night,
And where the discipline of mortal woe
No shadow over thee can ever throw.

Death never comes to such
With chillness in the mystery of his touch :
They gently pass away
As melts the morning star in golden day ;
They leave the places they have known below,
And through the white gates of the morning go.

We would not call thee back
To the frail flowers that wither on our track,
Perhaps to have thy feet
Pierced by the thorns that we so often meet :
For thou art in that fairer world than ours
Where love mourns not the fading of the flowers.

Why should we weep for thee
When thy pure soul from every ill is free ?
Our only tears should flow
For those, the loved, who linger still below,
From whom the light of thy dear smile is fled,
Who feel indeed that thou art with the dead.

Poems

We know the gloomy grave
Holds not the spirit which our Father gave ;
That loving, lustrous light,
That made the sphere in which it moved so bright,
Is shining with a clear and quenchless flame,
Rekindled at the source from whence it came.

Thou art not dead ! For death
Can only take away the mortal breath ;
And life, commencing here,
Is but the prelude to its full career ;
And Hope and Faith the blest assurance give —
“ We do not live to die ! We die to live ! ”

ANONYMOUS.



Death of a Sister.



I WILL not mock thee with the poor world's common
And heartless phrase,
Nor wrong the memory of a sainted woman
With idle praise.

With silence only as their benediction,
God's angels come
Where, in the shadow of a great affliction,
The soul sits dumb !

Yet would I say what thy own heart approveth ;
Our Father's will,
Calling to him the dear one whom he loveth,
Is mercy still.

God calls our loved ones, but we lose not wholly
What he hath given ;
They live on earth, in thought and deed, as truly
As in his heaven.

The Comforter

Up, then, my brother! Lo, the fields of harvest
Lie white in view!
She lives and loves thee, and the God thou servest
To both is true.

J. G. WHITTIER.



The Border-Lands.



FATHER, into thy loving hands
My feeble spirit I commit,
While wandering in these Border-Lands,
Until thy voice shall summon it.

Father, I would not dare to choose
A longer life, an earlier death;
I know not what my soul might lose
By shortened or protracted breath.

These Border-Lands are calm and still,
And solemn are their silent shades;
And my heart welcomes them, until
The light of life's long evening fades.

I hear them spoken of with dread,
As fearful and unquiet places;
Shades, where the living and the dead
Look sadly in each other's faces.

But since thy hand hath led me here,
And I have seen the Border-Land;
Seen the dark river flowing near,
Stood on its brink, as now I stand;

There has been nothing to alarm
My trembling soul; how could I fear
While thus encircled with thine arm?
I never felt thee half so near.

Poems

What should appal me in a place
That brings me hourly nearer thee?
When I may almost see thy face —
Surely 'tis here my soul would be.

EUPHEMIA SAXBY.



The Angel of Death.



WHY shouldst thou fear the beautiful angel, Death,
Who waits thee at the portals of the skies,
Ready to kiss away thy struggling breath,
Ready with gentle hand to close thine eyes?

How many a tranquil soul has passed away,
Fled gladly from fierce pain and pleasure's din,
To the eternal splendor of the day;
And many a troubled heart still calls for him.

Spirits too tender for the battle here
Have turned from life, its hopes, its fears, its charms;
And children, shuddering at a world so drear,
Have smiling passed away into his arms.

He whom thou fearest will, to ease its pain,
Lay his cold hand upon thy aching heart;
Will soothe the terrors of thy troubled brain,
And bid the shadows of earth's grief depart.

He will give back what neither time, nor might,
Nor passionate prayer, nor longing hope restore,
(Dear as to long blind eyes recovered sight)
He will give back those who are gone before.

Oh, what were life, if life were all? Thine eyes
Are blinded by their tears, or thou wouldst see
Thy treasures wait thee in the far-off skies,
And Death, thy friend, will give them all to thee.

A. A. PROCTER.

The Comforter

Away.



I CANNOT say, and I will not say,
That he is dead. He is just away!

With a cheery smile, and a wave of the hand,
He has wandered into an unknown land,

And left us dreaming how very fair
It needs must be since he lingers there.

And you — O you, who the wildest yearn
For the old-time step and the glad return —

Think of him faring on, as dear
In the love of There as the love of Here;

And loyal still, as he gave the blows
Of his warrior strength to his country's foes —

Mild and gentle, as he was brave,
When the sweetest love of his life he gave

To simple things; — where the violets grew
Pure as the eyes they were likened to,

The touches of his hands have strayed
As reverently as his lips have prayed;

When the little brown thrush that harshly chirred
Was dear to him as the mocking-bird;

And he pitied as much as a man in pain
A writhing honey-bee wet with rain.

Think of him still as the same, I say:
He is not dead — he is just away!

"FROM AFTERWHILES, USED BY PERMISSION
OF THE BOWEN-MERRILL Co."

Poems

Disentbralled.



DEAD! Do you say that he is dead?
Take back the word, it is not true!
An empty cage, you might have said,
Has lost the singer that we knew —
The song rose level with the stars,
That charmed us even in prison bars.

But dead? There can be no such word
For that which was serenely bright,
Made in the image of the Lord,
An effluence from the central light,
An inbreathed essence from on high,
A heaven-lit spark! that could not die.

Not dead — but free — he soars above
The limit of our lesser scope,
And we, because we shared his love,
May cherish the uplifting hope
That life to us is more, by just
His altitude above our dust.

More by the power he has attained
To minister as angels may;
More by the knowledge he has gained
Of love's supremest, patient way;
Of blessing through the cloud or sun,
So one all-perfect Will be done.

And he (the thought is radiant) he
This very moment may be near,
With solace meted soothingly
To feed a hope or hush a fear:
So true it is, divinest things
Come borne to us on hidden wings.

The Comforter

So well we know our Father's care
Hovers about us, night and day,
So sweet it is to think the air
Is moved in a mysterious way
By breath of one beloved on earth
Grown lovelier by celestial birth.

Then say not he is of the dead,
'Tis only we in cerements dim,
Who fail of life around, o'erhead;
But say it nevermore of him
Whom death to livelier joys has called,
Who lives among us disenthralled.

MARY B. DODGE.



My Dead.



I CANNOT think of them as dead,
Who walk with me no more;
Along the path of life I tread
They have but gone before.

My Father's house is mansioned fair
Beyond my vision dim;
All souls are his, and here or there
Are living unto him.

And still their silent ministry
Within my heart hath place,
As when on earth they walked with me
And met me face to face.

Their lives are made forever mine;
What they to me have been
Hath left henceforth its seal and sign
Engraven deep within.

Poems

Mine are they by an ownership
Nor time nor death can free ;
For God hath given to Love to keep
Its own eternally.

F. L. HOSMER.



Tired Out.



HE does well who does his best ;
Is he weary ? let him rest.
Brothers ! I have done my best,
I am weary — let me rest.
After toiling oft in vain,
Baffled, yet to struggle fain,
After toiling long to gain
Little good with weary pain,
Let me rest. But lay me low
Where the hedge-side roses blow,
Where the little daisies grow,
Where the winds a-maying go,
Where the foot-path rustics plod,
Where the breeze-bowed poplars nod,
Where the old woods worship God,
Where his pencil paints the sod,
Where the wedded throstle sings,
Where the young bird tries his wings,
Where at times the tempests roar,
Shaking distant sea and shore,
To be heard by me no more !
There beneath the breezy west,
Tired and thankful, let me rest
Like a child that sleepeth best
On its mother's gentle breast.

ANONYMOUS.

The Comforter

Sleep.



He sees when their footsteps falter, when their hearts grow
weak and faint ;
He marks when their strength is failing, and listens to each
complaint ;
He bids them rest for a season, for the pathway has grown
too steep ;
And folded in fair green pastures, he giveth his loved ones
sleep.

Like weary and worn-out children, that sigh for the daylight's
close,
He knows that they oft are longing for home and its sweet
repose ;
So he calls them in from their labors ere the shadows around
them creep,
And silently watching o'er them, he giveth his loved ones
sleep.

He giveth it, oh ! so gently, as a mother will hush to rest
The babe that she softly pillows so tenderly on her breast ;
Forgotten are now the trials and sorrows that made them
weep,
For with many a soothing promise, he giveth his loved ones
sleep.

He giveth it ! Friends the dearest can never this boon
bestow ;
But he touches the drooping eyelids, and placid the features
grow ;
Their foes may gather about them, and storms may round
them sweep,
But, guarding them safe from danger, he giveth his loved ones
sleep.

Poems

All dread of the distant future, all fears that oppressed
to-day,
Like mists that clear in the sunlight, have noiselessly passed
away;
Nor call nor clamor can rouse them from slumbers so pure
and deep,
For only his voice can reach them, who giveth his loved ones
sleep.

Weep not that their toils are over, weep not that their race
is run;
God grant we may rest as calmly when our work, like theirs,
is done!
Till then we would yield with gladness our treasures to him
to keep,
And rejoice in the sweet assurance, he giveth his loved ones
sleep.

ANONYMOUS.



The Sleep.



"He giveth his beloved sleep." Psalm cxxvii. 2.

Of all the thoughts of God that are
Borne inward unto souls afar,
Along the Psalmist's music deep,
Now tell me if that any is,
For gift or grace, surpassing this—
"He giveth his beloved, sleep"?

What would we give to our beloved?
The hero's heart to be unmoved,
The poet's star-tuned harp to sweep,
The patriot's voice to teach and rouse,
The monarch's crown to light the brows?
"He giveth his beloved, sleep."

The Comforter

What do we give to our beloved?
A little faith all undisproved,
A little dust to overweep,
And bitter memories to make
The whole earth blasted for our sake.
"He giveth his beloved, sleep."

"Sleep soft, beloved!" we sometimes say,
But have no tune to charm away
Sad dreams that through the eyelids creep;
But never doleful dream again
Shall break the happy slumber, when
"He giveth his beloved, sleep."

O earth, so full of dreary noises!
O men, with wailing in your voices!
O delvèd gold, the wailer's heap!
O strife, O curse, that o'er it fall!
God strikes a silence through you all,
And "giveth his beloved, sleep."

His dews drop mutely on the hill,
His cloud above it saileth still,
Though on its slope men sow and reap.
More softly than the dew is shed,
Or cloud is floated overhead,
"He giveth his beloved, sleep."

For me, my heart that erst did go
Most like a tired child at a show,
That sees through tears the mummers leap,
Would now its wearied vision close,
Would childlike on his love repose,
Who "giveth his beloved, sleep!"

And friends, dear friends, — when it shall be
That this low breath is gone from me,

Poems

And round my bier ye come to weep,
Let one, most loving of you all,
Say, "Not a tear must o'er her fall —
'He giveth his beloved, sleep!'"

E. B. BROWNING.



In Harbor.



I THINK it is over, over —
I think it is over at last :
Voices of foeman and lover,
The sweet and the bitter have passed :
Life, like a tempest of ocean,
Hath outblown its ultimate blast.
There's but a faint sobbing seaward,
While the calm of the tide deepens leeward
And behold ! like the welcoming quiver
Of heart pulses throbb'd through the river,
Those lights in the Harbor at last —
The heavenly Harbor at last !

I feel it is over, over —
The winds and the waters surcease :
How few were the days of the Rover
That smiled in the beauty of peace !
And distant and dim was the omen
That hinted redress or release.
From the ravage of Life and its riot,
What marvel I yearn for the quiet
Which bides in the Harbor at last ? —
For the lights with their welcoming quiver
That throb through the sanctified river,
Which girdles the Harbor at last —
The heavenly Harbor at last ?

The Comforter

I know it is over, over—

I know it is over at last :

Down sail ; the sheathed anchor uncover,

For the stress of the voyage has passed :

Life, like a tempest of ocean,

Hath outblown its ultimate blast.

There's but a faint sobbing seaward,

While the calm of the tide deepens leeward,

And behold ! like the welcoming quiver

Of heart-pulses throbbed through the river,

Those lights in the Harbor at last —

The heavenly Harbor at last !

PAUL H. HAYNE.



Gone.



ANOTHER hand is beckoning us,

Another call is given ;

And glows once more with angel-steps

The path which reaches heaven.

Our young and gentle friend, whose smile

Made brighter summer hours,

Amid the frosts of autumn time,

Has left us with the flowers.

The light of her young life went down,

As sinks behind the hill

The glory of a setting star, —

Clear, suddenly, and still.

As pure and sweet, her fair brow seemed

Eternal as the sky ;

And, like the brook's low song, her voice, —

A sound which could not die.

Poems

And half we deemed she needed not
The changing of her sphere,
To give to heaven a shining one,
Who walked an angel here.

The blessing of her quiet life
Fell on us like the dew ;
And good thoughts where her footsteps pressed,
Like fairy blossoms grew.

Sweet promptings unto kindest deeds
Were in her very look ;
We read her face as one who reads
A true and holy book.

We miss her in her place of prayer,
And by the hearth-fire's light ;
We pause beside her door to hear
Once more her sweet " Good-Night ! "

There seems a shadow on the day,
Her smile no longer cheers ;
A dimness on the stars of night,
Like eyes that look through tears.

Alone unto our Father's will
One thought hath reconciled ;
That he whose love exceedeth ours
Hath taken home his child.

Fold her, O Father ! in thine arms,
And let her henceforth be
A messenger of love between
Our human hearts and thee.

Still let her mild rebuking stand
Between us and the wrong,
And her dear memory serve to make
Our faith in goodness strong.

The Comforter

And grant that she, who, trembling here,
Distrusted all her powers,
May welcome to her holier home
The well-beloved of ours.

J. G. WHITTIER.



There is no Death.



THERE is no death ! The stars go down
To rise upon some fairer shore ;
And bright in Heaven's jewelled crown
They shine for evermore.

There is no death ! The dust we tread
Shall change beneath the summer showers
To golden grain, or mellow fruit,
Or rainbow tinted flowers.

The granite rocks disorganize
To feed the hungry moss they bear ;
The forest leaves drink daily life
From out the viewless air.

There is no death ! An angel form
Walks o'er the earth with silent tread ;
He bears our best loved things away,
And then we call them "dead."

He leaves our hearts all desolate,
He plucks our fairest, sweetest flowers ;
Transplanted into bliss, they now
Adorn immortal bowers.

Born unto that undying life,
They leave us but to come again ;
With joy we welcome them — the same,
Except in sin and pain.

Poems

And ever near us, though unseen,
The dear immortal spirits tread;
For all the boundless universe
Is life — there are no dead.

E. BULWER LYTTON.



The Choir Invisible.



OH may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence; live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
Of miserable aims that end in self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
And with their mild persistence urge men's minds
To vaster issues,

So to live is heaven.
To make undying music in the world,
Breathing as beauteous order, that controls
With growing sway the growing life of man.

This is life to come,
Which martyred men have made more glorious
For us who strive to follow. May I reach
That purest heaven; be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony;
Enkindle generous ardor; feed pure love;
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty;
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
And in diffusion ever more intense.
So shall I join the choir invisible,
Whose music is the gladness of the world.

GEORGE ELIOT.

The Comforter

A Baby's Death.



THE little feet that never trod
Earth, never strayed in field or street,
What hand leads upward back to God
The little feet?

Their pilgrimage's period
A few swift moons have seen complete
Since mother's hands first clasped and shod
The little feet.

The little hands that never sought
Earth's prizes, worthless all as sands,
What gift has death, God's servant, brought
The little hands?

Ere this, perchance, though love knows naught,
Flowers fill them, grown in lovelier lands,
Where hands of guiding angels caught
The little hands.

The little eyes that never knew
Light other than of dawning skies,
What new life now lights up anew -
The little eyes?

No storm, we know, may change the blue,
Soft heaven that haply death descries;
No tears like these in ours bedew
The little eyes.

A. C. SWINBURNE.

Poems

The Reaper and the Flowers.



THERE is a Reaper whose name is Death,
And, with his sickle keen,
He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,
And the flowers that grow between.

"Shall I have naught that is fair?" saith he;
"Have naught but the bearded grain?
Though the breath of these flowers is sweet to me,
I will give them all back again."

He gazed at the flowers with tearful eyes,
He kissed their drooping leaves;
It was for the Lord of Paradise
He bound them in his sheaves.

"My Lord has need of these flowerets gay,"
The Reaper said, and smiled;
"Dear tokens of the earth are they,
Where he was once a child.

"They shall all bloom in fields of light,
Transplanted by my care,
And saints upon their garments white
These sacred blossoms wear."

And the mother gave, in tears and pain,
The flowers she most did love;
She knew she should find them all again
In the fields of light above.

Oh, not in cruelty, not in wrath,
The Reaper came that day;
'Twas an angel visited the green earth,
And took the flowers away.

H. W. LONGFELLOW.

The Comforter

My Child.



I CANNOT make him dead !
His fair sunshiny head
Is ever bounding round my study chair ;
Yet when my eyes, now dim
With tears, I turn to him,
The vision vanishes, — he is not there !

I walk my parlor floor,
And, through the open door,
I hear a footfall on the chamber stair ;
I'm stepping toward the hall
To give the boy a call ;
And then bethink me that — he is not there !

I know his face is hid
Under the coffin lid,
Closed are his eyes ; cold is his forehead fair ;
My hand that marble felt ;
O'er it in prayer I knelt ;
Yet my heart whispers that — he is not there !

Not there ! Where, then, is he ?
The form I used to see
Was but the raiment that he used to wear.
The grave, that now doth press
Upon that cast-off dress,
Is but his wardrobe locked ; he is not there !

He lives ! — in all the past
He lives ; nor to the last,
Of seeing him again will I despair ;
In dreams I see him now ;
And, on his angel brow,
I see it written, " Thou shalt see me *there* ! "

Poems

Yes, we all live to God !
Father, thy chastening rod
So help us, thine afflicted ones, to bear,
That, in the spirit land,
Meeting at thy right hand,
'Twill be our heaven to find that -- he is there.

JOHN PIERPONT.



She is Not Dead, But Sleepeth.



THE baby wept ;
The mother took it from the nurse's arms,
And soothed its griefs, and stilled its vain alarms,
And baby slept.

Again it weeps ;
And God doth take it from the mother's arms,
From present pain, and future unknown harms,
And baby sleeps.

SAMUEL HINDS.



The Changeling.



I HAD a little daughter,
And she was given to me
To lead me gently backward
To the heavenly Father's knee,
That I by the force of nature,
Might, in some dim wise, divine
The depth of his infinite patience
To this wayward soul of mine.

The Comforter

I know not how others saw her,
But to me she was wholly fair,
And the light of the heaven she came from
Still lingered and gleamed in her hair;
For it was as wavy and golden,
And as many changes took,
As the shadow of sun-gilt ripples
On the yellow bed of a brook.

She had been with us scarce a twelvemonth,
And it hardly seemed a day,
When a troop of wandering angels
Stole my little daughter away;
Or perhaps those heavenly guardians
But loosed the hampering strings,
And when they had opened her cage door
My little bird used her wings.

But they left in her stead a changeling,
A little angel child,
That seems like her bud in full blossom,
And smiles as she never smiled.
This child is not mine as the first was,
I cannot sing it to rest,
I cannot lift it up fatherly
And bliss it upon my breast;
Yet it lies in my little one's cradle,
And sits in my little one's chair,
And the light of the heaven she's gone to
Transfigures its golden hair.

J. R. LOWELL.



Little Children.



In the baron's hall of pride,
By the poor man's dull fireside,

Poems

'Mid the mighty, 'mid the mean,
Little children may be seen.
Like the flowers that spring up fair,
Bright and countless everywhere!

Blessings on them ! they in me
Move a kindly sympathy,
With their wishes, hopes, and fears ;
With their laughter and their tears ;
With their wonder so intense,
And their small experience !

Little children, not alone
On this wide earth are ye known ;
'Mid its labors and its cares,
'Mid its sufferings and its snares ;
Free from sorrow, free from strife,
In the world of love and life,
Where no sinful thing hath trod —
In the presence of your God,
Spotless, blameless, glorified —
Little children, ye abide.

MARY HOWITT.



Childish Feet are Straying Homeward.



CHILDISH feet are straying Homeward,
Some have entered there to-day,
Passed, perchance, from paths of darkness,
To the peace for which we pray.
Gone, we know not from what suffering, —
Fled, we know not from what sin, —
O ye gates that open Heavenward,
Swing together, shut them in !

The Comforter

They at least are safe from falling
On the battlefield of life,
Overcome, as thousands have been,
By temptation, care, and strife ;
And have died with hands close gathered
In the tender clasp of ours ;
God be thanked that we could fold them
Pure as snow and full of flowers !

So, O Father, to thy keeping
Give we what we call "our own,"
Gone a little time before us
Through the portals leading Home ;
Safe from all the storms of sorrow,
Dark'ning now their land of birth,
Given with tears for hope lights faded,
To the breast of mother earth.

Yet with love's divinest token
Yielded to a tenderer care
Than the homes below can give them,
Or our human weakness bear,
They are safe from pain and sorrow,
We alone can bear the rod,
With these blossoms safely nurtured
In the garden of our God.

BARTHOLOMEW.



The Alpine Sheep.



AFTER our child's untroubled breath
Up to the Father took its way,
And on our home the shade of death
Like a long twilight haunting lay ;

Poems

And friends came round, with us to weep
Her little spirit's swift remove, —
The story of the Alpine sheep
Was told to us by one we love.

They, in the valley's sheltering care,
Soon crop the meadow's tender prime,
And when the sod grows brown and bare
The shepherd strives to make them climb

To airy shelves of pastures green,
That hang along the mountain's side,
Where grass and flowers together lean,
And down through mists the sunbeams slide.

But nought can tempt the timid things
The steep and rugged path to try,
Though sweet the shepherd calls and sings,
And seared below the pastures lie, —

Till in his arms their lambs he takes,
Along the dizzy verge to go,
Then, heedless of the rifts and breaks,
They follow on, o'er rock and snow.

And in those pastures, lifted fair,
More dewy soft than lowland mead,
The shepherd drops his tender care,
And sheep and lambs together feed.

This parable, by nature breathed,
Blew on me as the south wind free
O'er frozen brooks, that flow unsheathed
From icy thralldom to the sea.

A blissful vision, through the night,
Would all my happy senses sway,
Of the good shepherd on the height,
Or climbing up the stony way,

The Comforter

Holding *our* little lamb asleep,
While, like the murmur of the sea,
Sounded that voice along the deep,
Saying "Arise, and follow me!"

MARIA LOWELL.



Resignation.



THERE is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there!
THERE is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,
But has one vacant chair!

The air is full of farewells to the dying,
And mournings for the dead;
The heart of Rachel, for her children crying,
Will not be comforted!

Let us be patient! These severe afflictions
Not from the ground arise,
But oftentimes celestial benedictions
Assume this dark disguise.

We see but dimly through the mists and vapors:
Amid these earthly damps,
What seem to us but sad, funereal tapers
May be heaven's distant lamps.

There is no death! What seems so is transition;
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life elysian,
Whose portal we call Death.

She is not dead, — the child of our affection, —
But gone unto that school
Where she no longer needs our poor protection,
And Christ himself doth rule.

Poems

In that great cloister's stillness and seclusion,
By guardian angels led,
Safe from temptation, safe from sin's pollution,
She lives, whom we call dead.

Day after day we think what she is doing
In those bright realms of air;
Year after year, her tender steps pursuing,
Behold her grown more fair.

Thus do we walk with her, and keep unbroken
The bond which nature gives,
Thinking that our remembrance, though unspoken,
May reach her where she lives.

Not as a child shall we again behold her;
For, when with raptures wild
In our embraces we again enfold her,
She will not be a child,

But a fair maiden, in her Father's mansion,
Clothed with celestial grace;
And beautiful with all the soul's expansion
Shall we behold her face.

And though, at times, impetuous with emotion
And anguish long suppressed,
The swelling heart heaves, moaning like the ocean
That cannot be at rest,—

We will be patient, and assuage the feeling
We may not wholly stay;
By silence sanctifying, not concealing,
The grief that must have way.

H. W. LONGFELLOW.

The Comforter

Our Home-Maker.



WHERE the mountains slope to the westward,
And their purple chalices hold
The new made wine-of the sunset —
Crimson and amber and gold —

In this old, wide-opened doorway,
With the elm-boughs overhead —
The house all garnished behind her,
And the plentiful table spread —

She has stood to welcome our coming,
Watching our upward climb,
In the sweet June weather that brought us,
Oh, many and many a time!

To-day, in the gentle splendor
Of the early summer noon —
Perfect in sunshine and fragrance
Although it is hardly June —

Again is the doorway opened,
And the house is garnished and sweet;
But she silently waits for our coming;
And we enter with silent feet.

A little within she is waiting,
Not where she has met us before;
For over the pleasant threshold
She has only to cross once more.

The smile on her face is quiet,
And a lily is on her breast;
Her hands are folded together,
And the word on her lips is "rest."

Poems

And yet it looks like a welcome,
For her work is compassed and done;
All things are seemly and ready,
And her summer is just begun.

It is we who may not cross over:
Only with song and prayer,
A little way into the glory,
We may reach as we leave her there.

But we cannot think of her idle;
She must be a home-maker still;
God giveth that work to the angels
Who fittest the task fulfil;

And somewhere, yet, in the hilltops
Of the country that hath no pain,
She will watch in her beautiful doorway,
To bid us a welcome again.

A. D. T. WHITNEY.



The Home-Seeker.



I.

TWILIGHT falls: a tiny maiden
Cometh up the village street:
Vagrant locks, all dew laden,
Eager eyes and tired feet
Hath the shadowy little maiden.

Tired of wandering and of playing,
Up the dim street see her come!
Hurrying now, and now delaying,
Toward the rest and love of home,
Comes the maiden from her playing.

The Comforter

II.

See! again! a woman hasting
Down a shadowy, sunset way,
Loving, anxious glances casting
Through the twilight soft and gray;
Homeward, love-ward she is hasting.

Laughing children run to meet her
From the home-door open wide;
Loving words and kisses greet her,
Pattering feet run by her side;
All the home comes forth to meet her.

III.

Look once more! a pilgrim weary
Standeth in the twilight gray;
All around is strange and dreary,
As she asks, with plaintive query,
"Can you show the homeward way?
Lead me homeward: I am weary."

Then a Presence stood to guide her,
Pointing where the way did lie;
Gently spoke, and walked beside her
To a gateway dim and high.
"Home!" she breathed with restful sigh,
To the Presence that did guide her.

IV.

Homeward still, the tiny maiden,
Motherhood, love- and care-laden,
Age, with weight of years oppressed,
Homeward turn for love and rest.
And the home, with open door,
Waits with "Welcome" evermore.

W. H. SAVAGE.

Poems

Ripe Wheat.



WE bent o'er a confined form,
And our tears fell softly down ;
We looked our last on the aged face,
With its look of peace, its patient grace,
And hair like a silver crown.

We touched our own to the clay-cold hands,
From life's long labor at rest ;
And among the blossoms white and sweet
We noted a bunch of golden wheat,
Clasped close to the silent breast.

The blossoms whispered of fadeless bloom,
Of a land where fall no tears ;
The ripe wheat told of toil and care,
The patient waiting, the trusting prayer,
The garnered good of the years.

We knew not what work her hands had found,
What rugged places at her feet ;
What cross was hers, what blackness of night ;
We saw but the peace, the blossoms white,
And the bunch of ripened wheat.

As each goes up from the field of earth,
Bearing the treasure of life,
God looks for some gathered grain of good,
From the ripe harvest that shining stood,
But waiting the reaper's knife.

Then labor well, that in death you go
Not only with blossoms sweet, —
Not bent with doubt, and burdened with fears,
And dead, dry husks of the wasted years, —
But laden with golden wheat.

ELIZA O. PEIRSON.

The Comforter

The Old Man's Funeral.



I SAW an aged man upon his bier ;
His hair was thin and white, and on his brow
A record of the cares of many a year, —
Cares that were ended and forgotten now.
And there was sadness round, and faces bowed,
And woman's tears fell fast, and children wailed aloud.

Then rose another hoary man, and said,
In faltering accents to that weeping train,
“ Why mourn ye that our aged friend is dead ?
Ye are not sad to see the gathered grain :
Nor when their mellow fruits the orchards cast,
Nor when the yellow woods let fall the ripened mast.

“ Ye sigh not when the sun, his course fulfilled, —
His glorious course, rejoicing earth and sky, —
In the soft evening, when the winds are stilled,
Sinks where his islands of refreshment lie,
And leaves the smile of his departure spread
O'er the warm-colored heaven and ruddy mountain-head.

“ Why weep ye then for him, who, having won
The bound of man's appointed years, at last,
Life's blessings all enjoyed, life's labors done,
Serenely to his final rest has passed ;
While the soft memory of his virtues yet
Lingers, like twilight hues when the bright sun is set.

“ His youth was innocent ; his riper age
Marked with some act of goodness every day ;
And watched by eyes that loved him, calm and sage,
Faded his late declining years away :
Meekly he gave his being up, and went
To share the holy rest that waits a life well spent.

Poems

"That life was happy ; every day he gave
Thanks for the fair existence that was his ;
For a sick fancy made him not her slave,
To mock him with her phantom miseries. .
No chronic tortures racked his aged limbs,
For luxury and sloth had nourished none for him.

" And I am glad that he has lived thus long,
And glad that he has gone to his reward ;
Nor can I deem that Nature did him wrong,
Softly to disengage the vital cord ;
For when his hand grew palsied, and his eye
Dark with the mists of age, it was his time to die."

W. C. BRYANT.



The Finished Life.



THERE'S a beauty of the spring-time
With its fresh grass and its flowers,
With the song-birds in the branches
And the children's happy hours.

But there is no less of beauty
When the leaves turn gold and brown
In the short'ning days of autumn,
And far south the birds have flown.

If the rough hand of the tempest
Tears away the fresh young leaves,
Over youthful vigor wasted,
Who can wonder if one grieves ?

But when off the autumn branches
Drop the brown leaves one by one,
Seems it then as fair and fitting
As the setting of the sun.

The Comforter

Here the old man by the fireside
Backward looks through tender tears,
And he says, "With wife and children
Trod I long and happy years."

As he sitteth by the window
Looking o'er the city ways,
Whispers he, "Success and honor
Have been mine in gone-by days.

"I have seen the world's fair beauty;
I have tasted all its sweet;
Now, beyond my ~~two~~ and threescore,
Life for me is all complete.

"For the face of her who loved me
Beckons to me far away:
I have wrought the work God gave me,
Then why should I longer stay?"

And of friends, who'd dare to keep him?
Let us sound no fun'r'al knell;
But say of his life, "*'Twas blessed!*"
And say of his death, "*'Tis well!*"

M. J. SAVAGE.



The Good Old Grandmother.



O, SOFTLY waves the silver hair
From off that aged brow!
That crown of glory, worn so long,
A fitting crown is now.

Fold reverently the weary hands
That toiled so long and well;
And while your tears of sorrow fall
Let sweet thanksgivings swell.

Poems

That life-work stretching o'er long years
A varied web has been ;
With silver strands by sorrow wrought,
And sunny gleams between.

These silver hairs stole slowly on,
Like flakes of falling snow,
That wrap the green earth lovingly
When autumn breezes blow !

Each silver hair, each wrinkle there,
Records some good deed done ;
Some flower she cast along the way,
Some spark from love's bright sun.

How bright she always made the home !
It seemed as if the floor
Was always flecked with spots of sun,
And barred with brightness o'er.

The very falling of her step
Made music as she went ;
A loving song was on her lip,
The song of full content.

And now, in later years, her word
Has been a blessed thing
In many a home, where glad she saw
Her children's children spring.

Her widowed life has happy been
With brightness born of heaven ;
So pearl and gold in drapery fold
The sunset couch at even.

O gently fold the weary hands
That toiled so long and well !
The spirit rose to angel bands,
When off earth's mantle fell.

The Comforter

She's safe within her Father's house
Where many mansions be ;
O pray that thus such rest may come
Dear hearts, to thee and me !

ANONYMOUS.



Shadow and Sunlight.



WHY can we mourn, when, gently as the light
Glides into day, thy spirit, glad and free,
Went forth to break into the new, glad song
That raptured souls are singing endlessly ?

Why should our hearts lie heavy in this grief,
When in the ways of peace her feet have gone ;
When, like the fruit turned golden in the sun,
The Master came and chose the ripest one ?

He came to give the worn-out body rest,
To soothe to quiet every throbbing pain,
And still the voice of longing and regret
In a deep calm that naught can break again.

He came with heavy hand, but good intent,—
For her the sweetest smile, for us the frown,—
To lead her from the shadow of her cross
Up to the peaceful sunlight of her crown.

Her hidden life in broadened lines will run,
Her loving spirit blossom more and more :
For us 'tis death, for her 'tis life of life,
The opening, not the closing of the door.

We may not hear the voice so strangely dumb,
We may not touch the hand so strangely cold ;
"Dust unto dust," — we bow to the decree,
But she herself is ours to love and hold.

E. W. PREBLE.

Poems

The Dead One's Message.



COULD now the silence of these lips
Wake into speech once more to-day,
With their sweet tones of old-time love,
What last words, think you, would they say?

" Weep for me tenderly ; for I,
Were you here lying in my place,
Would press my warm lips on your brow,
And rain the hot tears on your face.

" For is it not death's sting to know
That, howe'er happy, still apart
Our pathways lead us, while the old,
Strong love still yearns within the heart ?

" And, when this body's laid away,
I'd have you my low earth-bed make
All fresh with grass, and sweet with flowers,
And sacred for the old-time's sake.

" But then, sweet friends, look up and on !
Let sunshine all the clouds break through ;
And do not, for my sake, forget
What *for the living* you should do !

" Let not the shadow of my loss
Darken the path the living tread ;
But let the memories of my past
Still cheer and help, though I am dead.

" These ears can hear your words no more,
However fondly you may speak :
For my sake, then, with words of love,
The living cheer, and help the weak.

" My heart, now still, no longer aches :
But weary thousands watch and wake

The Comforter

Through dreary nights and hopeless days;
Help them before their sad hearts break !

" Your willing hands for me have wrought;
But now I need your help no more,
The service you would render me
Give those who suffer at your door.

" Cherish my memory in your heart !
But, lest it grow a selfish thing,
Make channels for a thousand streams,
Of which my love shall be the spring.

" So from the grave I still may speak ;
Still help the sorrowing world to bless ;
Still live, though dead, and swell the tide
Of human love and happiness."

M. J. SAVAGE.



Blessed are They that Mourn.



OH, deem not they are blessed alone
Whose lives a peaceful tenor keep !
The Power who pities man, hath shown
A blessing for the eyes that weep.

The light of smiles shall fill again
The lids that overflow with tears ;
And weary hours of woe and pain
Are promises of happier years.

There is a day of sunny rest
For every dark and troubled night ;
And grief may bide an evening guest,
But joy shall come with early light.

Poems

And thou who, o'er thy friend's low bier,
Dost shed the bitter drops like rain,
Hope that a brighter, happier sphere
Will give him to thy arms again.

Nor let the good man's trust depart,
Though life its common gifts deny, —
Though with a pierced and bleeding heart,
And spurned of men, he goes to die.

For God hath marked each sorrowing day,
And numbered every secret tear,
And heaven's long age of bliss shall pay
For all his children suffer here.

WILLIAM C. BRYANT.



A. R. C.



WHEN falls the night upon the earth,
And all in shadow lies,
The sun's not dead: his radiance still
Beams bright on other skies.

And when the dawn star groweth dim
Upon the brow of morn,
It still shines on, though earthly eyes,
That miss it, grow forlorn.

Some other world is glad to see
Our star that's gone away:
The light whose going makes our night
Makes somewhere else a day.

The feet that cease their walking here,
Tired of the way they've trod,

The Comforter

With strength renewed go travelling
The pathway up to God.

The hand whose patient fingers now
Have laid earth's labor by,
With loving skill has taken up
Some higher ministry.

The eyes that give no longer back
The tender look of love,
Now, with a deathless gleam, drink in
God's beauteous world above.

The lips whose sweet tones made us ask
If angels sweeter sung,
Though silent here, make heaven glad
With their melodious tongue.

And, though her body lies asleep,
Our favorite is not dead;
She rises through dark death's bright birth,
"With joy upon her head."

And she is just our loved one still,
And loves us now no less;
She goes away to come again, —
To watch us, and to bless.

And though we cannot clasp her hand,
Nor look upon her face,
Nor listen to her voice again,
Nor watch her ways of grace, —

Still we can keep her memory bright,
And walk the way she trod,
And trust she waits until we come
Up to the house of God.

Poems

Let us be thankful, through our tears,
That she was ours so long,
And try to hush our tones of grief,
And listen to her song.

M. J. SAVAGE.



Waiting.



SERENE, I fold my hands and wait,
Nor care for wind, or tide, or sea;
I rave no more 'gainst time or fate,
For lo! my own shall come to me.

I stay my haste, I make delays,
For what avails this eager pace?
I stand amid the eternal ways,
And what is mine shall know my face.

Asleep, awake, by night or day,
The friends I seek are seeking me;
No wind can drive my bark astray,
Nor change the tide of destiny.

What matter if I stand alone?
I wait with joy the coming years;
My heart shall reap where it has sown,
And garner up its fruit of tears.

The waters know their own, and draw
The brook that springs in yonder height;
So flows the good with equal law
Unto the soul of pure delight.

The stars come nightly to the sky;
The tidal wave unto the sea;
Nor time, nor space, nor deep, nor high,
Can keep my own away from me.

JOHN BURROUGHS.

The Comforter

Atbanasia.



THE ship may sink,
And I may drink
A hasty death in the bitter sea ;
But all that I leave
In the ocean grave
Can be slipped and spared, and no loss to me.

What care I,
Though falls the sky,
And the shrivelling earth to a cinder burn ?
No fires of doom
Can ever consume
What never was made nor meant to burn.

Let go the breath !
There is no death
To the living soul, nor loss, nor harm.
Not of the clod
Is the life of God :
Let it mount, as it will, from form to form.

CHARLES G. AMES.



Blessed are They that Mourn.



OH, deem not that earth's crowning bliss
Is found in joy alone ;
For sorrow, bitter though it be,
Hath blessings all its own ;
From life divine, like healing balm,
To hearts oppressed and torn,
His heavenly consolation fell, —
" Blessed are they that mourn ! "

Poems

As blossoms smitten by the rain
Their sweetest odors yield,
As where the ploughshare deepest strikes
Rich harvests crown the field,
So, to the hopes by sorrow crushed,
A nobler faith succeeds;
And life, by trials furrowed, bears
The fruit of loving deeds.

Who never mourned, hath never known
What treasures grief reveals:
The sympathies that humanize,
The tenderness that heals,
The power to look within the veil
And learn the heavenly lore,
The key-word to life's mysteries,
So dark to us before.

How rich and sweet and full of strength
Our human spirits are,
Baptized into the sanctities
Of suffering and of prayer!
Supernal wisdom, love divine,
Breathed through the lips which said,
"Oh, blessed are the souls that mourn —
They shall be comforted!"

WILLIAM HENRY BURLEIGH.



Sometime.



SOMETIME, when all life's lessons have been learned,
And sun and stars for evermore have set,
The things which our weak judgment here have spurned,
The things o'er which we grieved with lashes wet,

The Comforter

Will flash before us, out of life's dark night,
As stars shine most in deeper tints of blue;
And we shall see how all God's plans were right,
And how what seemed reproof was love most true.

And we shall see how, while we frown and sigh,
God's plans go on as best for you and me;
How, when we called, he heeded not our cry,
Because his wisdom to the end could see.
And e'en as prudent parents disallow
Too much of sweet to craving babyhood,
So God, perhaps, is keeping from us now
Life's sweetest things, because it seemeth good.

And if, sometimes, commingled with life's wine,
We find the wormwood, and rebel and shrink,
Be sure a wiser hand than yours or mine
Pours out this potion for our lips to drink.
And if some friend we love is lying low,
Where human kisses cannot reach his face,
Oh, do not blame the loving Father so,
But wear your sorrow with obedient grace!

And you will shortly know that lengthened breath
Is not the sweetest gift God sends his friends,
And that, sometimes, the sable pall of death
Conceals the fairest boon his love can send.
If we could push ajar the gates of life,
And stand within, and all God's workings see,
We could interpret all this doubt and strife,
And for each mystery could find a key!

But not to-day. Then be content, poor heart!
God's plans, like lilies, pure and white unfold;
We must not tear the close-shut leaves apart,
Time will reveal the chalices of gold.

Poems

And if, through patient toil, we reach the land
Where tired feet, with sandals loosed, may rest,
When we shall clearly know and understand,
I think that we will say, "God knew the best!"

MAY RILEY SMITH.



Prayer for Strength.



FATHER, before thy footstool kneeling,
Once more my heart goes up to thee,
For aid, for strength to thee appealing,
Thou who alone canst succor me.

Hear me! for heart and flesh are failing,
My spirit yielding in the strife;
And anguish, wild as unavailing,
Sweeps in a flood across my life.

Help me to stem the tide of sorrow;
Help me to bear thy chastening rod;
Give me endurance; let me borrow
Strength from thy promise, O my God!

Not mine the grief which words may lighten;
Not mine the tears of common woe:
The pang with which my heart-strings tighten,
Only the All-seeing One may know.

And oh! in my exceeding weakness,
Make thy strength perfect; thou art strong:
Aid me to do thy will with meekness,—
Thou, to whom all my powers belong.

Oh! let me feel that thou art near me;
Close to my side, I shall not fear:
Hear me, O strength of Israel, hear me!
Sustain and aid! in mercy hear!

ANONYMOUS.

The Comforter

Get a Little While.



OH! for the peace which floweth as a river,
Making life's desert places bloom and smile.
Oh! for a faith to grasp heaven's bright forever
Amid the shadows of earth's "little while."

A little while for patient vigil-keeping,
To face the storm, to wrestle with the strong;
A little while to sow the seed with weeping,
Then bind the sheaves, and sing the harvest-song.

A little while midst shadow and illusion,
To strive, by faith, love's mysteries to spell;
Then read each dark enigma's bright solution,
Then hail sight's verdict, "He doth all things well!"

And he who is himself the Gift and Giver,
The future glory and the present smile,
With the bright promise of the glad "forever"
Will light the shadows of earth's "little while."

JANE CREWDSOME.



Absence.



WHAT shall I do with all the days and hours
That must be counted ere I see thy face?
How shall I charm the interval that lowers
Between this time and that sweet time of grace?

I'll tell thee: for thy sake, I will lay hold
Of all good aims, and consecrate to thee,
In worthy deeds, each moment that is told
While thou, beloved one, art far from me.

Poems

For thee I will arouse my thoughts to try
All heavenward flights, all high and holy strains;
For thy dear sake I will walk patiently
Through these long hours, nor call their minutes pains.

I will this weary blank of absence make
A noble task-time, and will therein strive
To follow excellence, and to o'ertake
More good than I have won since yet I live.

So may this darksome time build up in me
A thousand graces which shall thus be thine;
So may my love and longing hallowed be,
And thy dear thought an influence divine.

FRANCES ANNE KEMBLE.



From Christus Victor.



XXIV.

A TOMB was built of massive stones,
Fast clamped with many an iron band;
Below, among ancestral bones,
Lay the last noble of the land.

"Closed be this tomb, these stones unmoved,"
So ran the legend graven deep,
"Their line is done, their worth is proved,
Let them in peace forever sleep."

A tiny seed came floating by,
Borne gently on the summer breeze,
A living germ, not doomed to die,
Offspring of sturdy forest trees.

The Comforter

It fell to earth unheard, unseen,
Within a little crevice lay,
And slumbered there in peace serene,
Unknown, unnoticed, many a day.

Its rootlet slowly downward crept
Through narrow paths with granite walled,
Where long-dead generations slept ;
Nor was it by the gloom appalled.

Its fibres grappled with the dead
That dwelt in ghastly grandeur there ;
Upon their mouldering ashes fed,
Transmuting dust to verdure fair.

Into the air the seedling sped,
The tree rejoicing sought the light ;
Its branches triumphed o'er the dead
That long had lain in slumberous night.

Till, nourished by the sun and rain,
It gathered strength from day to day ;
Then rent its mighty bonds in twain
And rolled the granite rocks away.

The sunlight trespassed in the tomb,
The breezes laughed with fragrant breath,
New life dispelled the ancient gloom,
And mocked the vaunted power of death !

XXXI.

Low hung the sky, and gray and chill,
The woodland missed the joyous glow
Of summer, faded long ago ;
The moaning wind swept round the hill.

Poems

As each wild gust fled hurrying by,
Dead leaves like rainfall smote the ground;
And, rustling with regretful sound,
The trees made answer with a sigh.

My heart was heavy with the thought:
"Must we, too, shrivel in the blast
Of death, and perish at the last? —
Must life's fair promise come to naught?

"Are lives as fruitless as they seem?
The future but a vision fair
That, fading, leaves us to despair?
And is immortal hope a dream?"

Nay, cheer thee, Heart, for even now
Where from the stem dead leaves are torn,
Lo, autumn buds of spring are born;
And Hope is writ on every bough.

Though wintry dirges round me wail,
I hear the swaying branches sing,
I hear faint murmurs of the spring;
These buds will wake and life prevail!

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Forever.



THOSE we love truly never die,
Though year by year the sad memorial wreath,
A ring and flowers, types of life and death,
Are laid upon their graves.

The Comforter

For death the pure life saves,
And life all pure is love; and love can reach
From heaven to earth, and nobler lessons teach
Than those by mortals read.

Well blessed is he who has a dear one dead :
A friend he has whose face will never change —
A dear communion that will not grow strange ;
The anchor of a love is death.

The blessed sweetness of a loving breath
Will reach our cheek all fresh through weary years.
For her who died long since, ah ! waste not tears,
She's thine unto the end.

JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY.



Good-Bye, till Morning.



" GOOD-BYE, till morning come again ! "
We part, but not with aught of pain,
The night is short, and hope is sweet,
It fills our hearts and wings our feet ;
And so we sing the glad refrain,
" Good-bye, till morning comes again ! "

" Good-bye, till morning come again ! "
The shade of death brings thought of pain,
But could we know how short the night
That falls and hides them from our sight,
Our hearts would sing the glad refrain,
" Good-bye, till morning comes again ! "

ANONYMOUS.

Poems

Dropping Down the River.



DROPPING down the troubled river,
To the tranquil, tranquil shore;
Dropping down the misty river,
Time's willow-shaded river,
To the spring embosomed shore;
Where the sweet light shineth ever,
And the sun goes down no more;
O wondrous, wondrous shore!

Dropping down the winding river,
To the wide and welcome sea;
Dropping down the narrow river,
Man's weary, wayward river,
To the blue and ample sea;
Where no tempest wrecketh ever,
Where the sky is fair and free;
O joyous, joyous sea!

Dropping down the noisy river,
To our peaceful, peaceful home;
Dropping down the turbid river,
Earth's bustling, crowded river,
To our gentle, gentle home:
Where the rough roar riseth never,
And the vexings cannot come,
O loved and longed-for home!

Dropping down the rapid river,
To the dear and deathless land;
Dropping down the well-known river,
Life's swoln and rushing river,
To the resurrection-land;
Where the living live forever,
And the dead have joined the band,
In that fair and blessed land!

HORATIUS BONAR.

The Comforter

The Deserted House.



LIFE and Thought have gone away
Side by side,
Leaving door and windows wide.
Careless tenants they!

All within is dark as night;
In the windows is no light;
And no murmur at the door,
So frequent on its hinge before.

Close the door, the shutters close,
Or through the windows we shall see
The nakedness and vacancy
Of the dark, deserted house.

Come away: no more of mirth
Is here or merry-making sound.
The house was builded of the earth,
And shall fall again to ground.

Come away: for Life and Thought
Here no longer dwell;
But in a city glorious —
A great and distant city — have bought
A mansion incorruptible.
Would they could have stayed with us!

TENNYSON.



Suspiria.



TAKE them, O Death! and bear away
Whatever thou canst call thine own!
Thine image, stamped upon this clay,
Doth give thee that, but that alone!

Poems

Take them, O Grave ! and let them lie
Folded upon thy narrow shelves,
As garments by the soul laid by,
And precious only to ourselves !

Take them, O great Eternity !
Our little life is but a gust
That bends the branches of thy tree,
And trails its blossoms in the dust !

LONGFELLOW.



The Charmer.



" WE need some charmer, for our hearts are sore
With longing for the things that may not be ;
Faint for the friends that shall return no more ;
Dark with distrust, or wrung with agony.

" What is this life ? and what to us is death ?
Whence came we ? whither go ? and where are those
Who, in a moment stricken from our side,
Passed to that land of shadows and repose ?

" And are they dust ? and dust must we become ?
Or are they living in some unknown clime ?
Shall we regain them in that far-off home,
And live anew beyond the waves of time ? "

So spake the youth of Athens, weeping round,
When Socrates lay calmly down to die ;
So spake the sage, prophetic of the hour
When earth's fair morning-star should rise on high.

They found him not, those youths of soul divine,
Long seeking, wandering, watching on life's shore —
Reasoning, aspiring, yearning for the light,
Death came and found them — doubting as before.

The Comforter

But years passed on ; and lo ! the Charmer came —
Pure, simple, sweet, as comes the silver dew ;
And the world knew him not — he walked alone,
Encircled only by his trusting few.

“ Let not your heart be troubled,” then he said ;
“ My Father’s house hath mansions large and fair ;
I will go before you to prepare your place ;
I will return to take you with me there.”

And since that hour the awful foe is charmed,
And life and death are glorified and fair.
Whither he went we know — the way we know —
And with firm step press on to meet him there.

H. B. STOWE.



The Eternal Goodness.



WITHIN the maddening maze of things,
And tossed by storm and flood,
To one fixed stake my spirit clings :
I know that God is good.

I long for household voices gone,
For vanished smiles I long ;
But God hath led my dear ones on,
And he can do no wrong.

I know not what the future hath
Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
His mercy underlies.

Poems

And if my heart and flesh are weak
To bear an untried pain,
The bruised reed he will not break,
But strengthen and sustain.

And so beside the silent sea
I wait the muffled oar ;
No harm from him can come to me,
On ocean or on shore.

I know not where his islands lift
Their fronded palms in air ;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond his love and care.

JOHN G. WHITTIER.



To J. S.



GOD gives us love. Something to love
He lends us ; but, when love is grown
To ripeness, that on which it throve
Falls off, and love is left alone.

And though mine own eyes fill with dew,
Drawn from the spirit through the brain,
I will not even preach to you,
" Weep, weeping dulls the inward pain."

I will not say " God's ordinance
Of death is blown in every wind ; "
For that is not a common chance
That takes away a noble mind.

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace ;
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,

The Comforter

While the stars burn, the moons increase,
And the great ages onward roll.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet,
Nothing comes to thee new or strange;
Sleep full of rest from head to feet;
Lie still, dry dust, secure of change.

ALFRED TENNYSON.



Hope's Song.



I HEAR it singing, singing sweetly,
Softly in an undertone,
Singing as if God had taught it,
"It is better farther on!"

Night and day it brings the message,
Sings it while I sit alone;
Sings so that the heart may hear it,
"It is better farther on!"

Sits upon the grave and sings it,
Sings it when the heart would groan,
Sings it when the shadows darken,
"It is better farther on."

Farther on? Oh! how much farther?
Count the mile-stones one by one.
No! no counting—only trusting
"It is better farther on!"

ANONYMOUS.

Poems

The God of the Living.



GOD of the living, in whose eyes
Unveiled thy whole creation lies !
All souls are thine ; we must not say
That those are dead who pass away ;
From this our world of flesh set free,
We know them living unto thee.

Released from earthly toil and strife,
With thee is hidden still their life ;
Thine are their thoughts, their words, their powers,
All thine, and yet most truly ours ;
For well we know, where'er they be,
Our dead are living unto thee.

Not spilt like water on the ground,
Not wrapt in dreamless sleep profound,
Not wandering in unknown despair
Beyond thy voice, thine arm, thy care ;
Not left to lie like fallen tree ;
Not dead, but living unto thee.

O Breather into man of breath !
O Holder of the keys of death !
O Giver of the life within !
Save us from death, the death of sin,
That body, soul, and spirit be
For ever living unto thee.

JOHN ELLERTON.



Life.



LIFE ! I know not what thou art,
But know that thou and I must part ;
And when, or how, or where we met,
I own to me 's a secret yet.

The Comforter

Life! we've been long together,
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather;
'Tis hard to part when friends are dear, —
Perhaps 'twill cost a sigh, a tear;
Then steal away, give little warning,
Choose thine own time;
Say not Good-Night, — but in some brighter clime
Bid me Good-Morning.

ANNA L. BARBAULD.



The Angel of Patience.



To weary hearts, to mourning homes,
God's meekest Angel gently comes;
No power has he to banish pain,
Or give us back our lost again;
And yet in tenderest love our dear
And heavenly Father sends him here.

There's quiet in that Angel's glance;
There's rest in his still countenance!
He mocks no grief with idle cheer,
Nor wounds with words the mourner's ear;
But ills and woes he may not cure
He kindly trains us to endure.

Angel of Patience! sent to calm
Our feverish brows with cooling balm;
To lay the storms of hope and fear,
And reconcile life's smile and tear;
The throbs of wounded pride to still,
And make our own our Father's will!

O thou who mournest on thy way,
With longings for the close of day!

Poems

He walks with thee, that Angel kind,
And gently whispers, "Be resigned :
Bear up, bear on, the end shall tell
The dear Lord ordereth all things well !"

JOHN G. WHITTIER



Out of the Depths.



Thou that art strong to comfort, look on me !
I sit in darkness, and behold no light !
Over my heart the waves of agony
Have gone and left me faint ! Forbear to smite
A bruised and broken reed ! Sustain, sustain,
Divinest Comforter, to thee I fly ;
Let me not fly in vain !
Support me with thy love, or else I die !
Whate'er I had was thine !
A God of mercy thou hast ever been ;
Assist me to resign,
And if I murmur, count it not for sin !
How rich I was, I dare not — dare not think ;
How poor I am, thou knowest, who can see
Into my soul's unfathomed misery ;
Forgive me if I shrink !
Forgive me if I shed these human tears,
That it so hard appears
To yield my will to thine, forgive, forgive !
Father, it is a bitter cup to drink !

My soul is strengthened ! it shall bear
My lot, whatever it may be ;
And from the depths of my despair
I will look up and trust in thee !

MARY HOWITT.

The Comforter

Parting and Welcome.



GOD giveth quietness at last !
The common way once more is passed
From pleading tears and lingerings fond,
To fuller life and love beyond.

Fold the rapt soul in your embrace,
Dear ones familiar with the place !
While to the gentle greetings there
We answer here with murmured prayer.

What to shut eyes hath God revealed ?
What hear the ears that death hath sealed ?
What undreamed beauty, passing show,
Requites the loss of all we know ?

O silent land, to which we move,
Enough, if there alone be love !
And mortal need can ne'er outgrow
What it is waiting to bestow !

O pure soul ! from that far-off shore
Float some sweet song the waters o'er ;
Our faith confirm, our fears dispel,
With the dear voice we loved so well !

J. G. WHITTIER.



From "In Memoriam."



LIII.

OH yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood ;

Poems

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivelled in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last — far off — at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream: but what am I?
An infant crying in the night;
An infant crying for the light;
And with no language but a cry.

LIV.

I falter where I firmly trod,
And, falling with my weight of cares
Upon the world's great altar-stairs
That slope through darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.

ALFRED TENNYSON.

The Comforter

Auld Lang Syne.



It singeth low in every heart,
We hear it, each and all, —
A song of those who answer not,
However we may call ;
They throng the silence of the breast,
We see them as of yore, —
The kind, the brave, the true, the sweet,
Who walk with us no more !

'Tis hard to take the burden up,
When these have laid it down ;
They brightened all the joy of life,
They softened every frown ;
But oh, 'tis good to think of them,
When we are troubled sore !
Thanks be to God that such have been,
Though they are here no more !

More homelike seems the vast unknown,
Since they have entered there ;
To follow them were not so hard,
Wherever they may fare ;
They cannot be where God is not,
On any sea or shore ;
Whate'er betides, thy love abides,
Our God, forevermore !

J. W. CHADWICK.



Buried At Sea.



NOT in the church-yard shall he sleep,
Amid the silent gloom, —
His home was on the mighty deep,
And there shall be his tomb.

Poems

He loved his own bright, deep blue sea,
O'er it he loved to roam ;
And now his winding sheet shall be
That same bright ocean's foam.

No village bell shall toll for him
Its mournful, solemn dirge ;
The winds shall chant a requiem
To him beneath the surge.

For him, break not the grassy turf,
Nor turn the dewy sod ;
His dust shall rest beneath the surf,
His spirit with its God.

ANONYMOUS.



Afterward.



THERE *is* no vacant chair. The loving meet —
A group unbroken — smitten, who knows how ?
One sitteth silent only, in his usual seat ;
We gave him once that freedom. Why not now ?

Perhaps he is too weary, and needs rest ;
He needed it too often, nor could we
Bestow. God gave it, knowing how to do so best —
Which of us would disturb him ? Let him be.

There is no vacant chair. If he will take
The mood to listen mutely, be it done.
By his least mood we crossed, for which the heart must ache,
Plead not nor question. Let him have this one.

The Comforter

Death is a mood of life. It is no whim
By which life's Giver mocks a broken heart.
Death is life's reticence. Still audible to Him,
The hushed voice, happy, speaketh on, apart.

There is no vacant chair. To love is still
To have. Nearer to memory than the eye,
And dearer yet to anguish than to comfort, will
We hold him by our love, that shall not die.

For while it doth not, thus he cannot. Try!
Who can put out the motion or the smile?
The old ways of being noble all with him laid by?
Because we love, he is. Then trust awhile.

ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS WARD.



How Will It Be.



How will it be when, by and by,
I dwell no more beneath the sky?
I cannot hide the plain, hard truth
That victor days have buried youth.
We spin our cycles round the sun,
Unpausing till the end be won;
But what end none of us can see,
I wonder much how it will be.

I hope it will not all be strange,
A life beyond the reach and range
Of that experience and skill
That here have come through hand and will.
I rather choose to just go on
The way my days have always gone,
The same great laws around me still,
Earth's possible to quite fulfil.

Poems

I pray that the new life may be
As good as earth has been to me;
That I may be no shade or ghost;
That no essential may be lost;
That what I learn through strife and pain
May always count for good and gain;
That joy and sweet serenity
Shall partly still depend on me.

For seraph wings and golden street
And great white throne I am not meet;
I would prefer a flower or two
Each morning, sparkling in the dew;
A few old scenes, a few old friends;
Old workings out from means to ends;
Or what will seem the same to me,
With all things changed in like degree.

To lose all these at death's release,
Or to forget them, is to cease.
But if God plans some sweet surprise
To dawn upon my soul's new eyes,
And when new light shall on me stream,
I find all better than I dream,
I'll bow my head, my feet unshod,
And say " 'Tis like Him — He is God."

DWIGHT M. HODGE.



Over the River.



OVER the river they beckon to me,
Loved ones who've crossed to the farther side,
The gleam of their snowy robes I see,
But their voices are lost in the dashing tide.

.

The Comforter

For none return from those quiet shores,
Who cross with the boatman cold and pale;
We hear the dip of the golden oars,
And catch a gleam of the snowy sail;
And lo! they have passed from our yearning hearts,
They cross the stream and are gone for aye.
We may not sunder the veil apart
That hides from our vision the gates of day;
We only know that their barks no more
May sail with us o'er life's stormy sea;
Yet somewhere, I know, on the unseen shore,
They watch, and beckon, and wait for me.

And I sit and think, when the sunset's gold
Is flushing river and hill and shore,
I shall one day stand by the water cold,
And list for the sound of the boatman's oar;
I shall watch for a gleam of the flapping sail,
I shall hear the boat as it gains the strand,
I shall pass from sight with the boatman pale,
To the better shore of the spirit land.
I shall know the loved who have gone before,
And joyfully sweet will the meeting be,
When over the river, the peaceful river,
The angel of death shall carry me.

NANCY A. W. PRIEST.



Here and There.



HERE is the sorrow, the sighing,
Here are the cloud and the night;
Here is the sickness, the dying, —
There are the life and the light;

Poems

Here is the fading, the wasting,
The foe that so watchfully waits ;
There are the hills everlasting,
The city with beautiful gates.

Here are the locks growing hoary,
The glass with the vanishing sands ;
There are the crown and the glory,
The house that is made not with hands.

Here is the longing, the vision,
The hopes that so swiftly remove ;
There is the blessed fruition,
The feast, and the fulness of love.

Here are the heart-strings a-tremble,
And here is the chastening rod ;
There is the song and the cymbal,
And there is our Father and God.

ALICE CARY.



The Other Side.



CLIMBING the mountain's shaggy crest,
I wondered much what sight would greet
My eager gaze whene'er my feet
Upon the topmost height should rest.

The other side was all unknown ;
But, as I slowly toiled along,
Sweeter to me than any song
My dream of visions to be shown.

At length the topmost height was gained ;
The other side was full in view ;
My dreams — not one of them was true,
But better far had I attained.

The Comforter

For far and wide on either hand
There stretched a valley broad and fair,
With greenness flashing everywhere,—
A pleasant, smiling, home-like land.

Who knows, I thought, but so 'twill prove
Upon that mountain-top of death,
Where we shall draw diviner breath,
And see the long-lost friends we love.

It may not be as we have dreamed,
Not half so awful, strange, and grand;
A quiet, peaceful, home-like land,
Better than e'er in vision gleamed.

J. W. CHADWICK.



The Future.



WHAT may we take into the vast Forever?
That marble door
Admits no fruit of all our long endeavor,
No fame-wreathed crown we wore,
No garnered lore.

What can we bear beyond the unknown portal?
No gold, no gains,
Of all our toiling; in the life immortal
No hoarded wealth remains,
Nor gilds, nor stains.

Naked from out that far abyss behind us
We entered here:
No word came with our coming, to remind us
What wondrous world was near,
No hope, no fear.

Poems

Into the silent, starless Night before us,
Naked we glide :
No hand has mapped the constellations o'er us,
No comrade at our side,
No chart, no guide.

Yet fearless toward that midnight, black and hollow,
Our footsteps fare :
The beckoning of a Father's hand we follow —
His love alone is there,
No curse, no care.

EDWARD ROWLAND SILL.



The Other World.



It lies around us like a cloud, —
A world we do not see;
Yet the sweet closing of an eye
May bring us there to be.

Its gentle breezes fan our cheek;
Amid our worldly cares
Its gentler voices whisper love,
And mingle with our prayers.

Sweet hearts around us throb and beat,
Sweet helping hands are stirred,
And palpitates the veil between
With breathings almost heard.

The silence, — awful, sweet, and calm,
They have no power to break ;
For mortal words are not for them
To utter or partake.

The Comforter

So thin, so soft, so sweet they glide,
So near to press they seem, —
They seem to lull us to our rest,
And melt into our dream.

And in the hush of rest they bring,
'Tis easy now to see
How lovely and how sweet a pass
The hour of death may be.

To close the eye, and close the ear,
Wrapped in a trance of bliss,
And gently dream in loving arms,
To swoon to that, — from this.

Scarce knowing if we wake or sleep,
Scarce asking where we are,
To feel all evil sink away,
All sorrow and all care.

Sweet souls around us ! watch us still,
Press nearer to our side,
Into our thoughts, into our prayers,
With gentle helpings glide.

Let death between us be as naught,
A dried and vanished stream ;
Your joy be the reality,
Our suffering life, the dream.

H. B. STOWE.



Beyond.



It seemeth such a little way to me
Across to that strange country — the Beyond ;
And yet, not strange, for it has grown to be
The home of those of whom I am so fond,

Poems

They make it seem familiar and most dear,
As journeying friends bring distant regions near.

So close it lies, that when my sight is clear
I think I almost see the gleaming strand.
I know I feel those who have gone from here
Come near enough sometimes to touch my hand.
I often think, but for our veiled eyes,
We should find Heaven right round about us lies.

I cannot make it seem a day to dread,
When from this dear earth I shall journey out
To that still dearer country of the dead,
And join the lost ones, so long dreamed about.
I love this world, yet shall I love to go
And meet the friends who wait for me, I know.

I never stand above a bier and see
The seal of death set on some well-belovèd face
But that I think, "One more to welcome me,
When I shall cross the intervening space
Between this land and that one 'over there;'
One more to make the strange Beyond seem fair."

And so for me there is no sting to death,
And so the grave has lost its victory.
It is but crossing — with a bated breath,
And white, set face — a little strip of sea,
To find the loved ones waiting on the shore,
More beautiful, more precious than before.

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

The Comforter

Good Bye.



O BLESSED life of service and of love,
Full of such duties as God's angels know !
His servants serve Him day and night above,
Thou servedst day and night, we thought, below.

O faithful heart, that recked not care or pain
When Duty called thee, or when Love did lead,
Thou gavest freely, asking not again
The word of comfort or the costly deed.

O gentle hands, so busy evermore
With healing touch or helpful tenderness !
'Twas yours to lift the burdens others bore, —
Your sole reward the joy of usefulness.

O tireless feet, still walking till the last
Your patient round, as noiseless as the sun !
Your toilsome journey now is overpast,
Your years of pilgrimage at length are done.

We know not how to say the word "Good bye."
We know not how to leave thee at the gate
That opens for thee towards that city high
Where other hands with loving welcome wait.

We long shall miss thee as we go our ways.
The home will miss thee from its broken band.
Full many a tear will tell thy sober praise,
And all good works will miss thy helping hand.

And yet, Good bye ! Good bye ! thou faithful soul !
From toil and trouble thou hast earned release.
Thy weary feet are resting at the goal,
The pain of living ended in God's peace.

Poems

Crossing the Bar.



SUNSET and evening star,
And one clear call for me !
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea ;

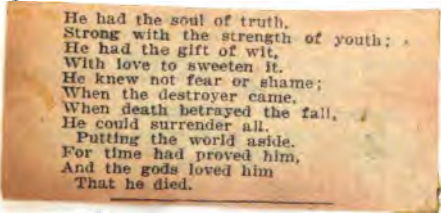
But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep,
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark !
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark ;

For though from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face,
When I have cross'd the bar.

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON.

Vale .



He had the soul of truth,
Strong with the strength of youth ;
He had the gift of wit,
With love to sweeten it,
He knew not fear or shame ;
When the destroyer came,
When death betrayed the fall,
He could surrender all.
Putting the world aside,
For time had proved him,
And the gods loved him
That he died.

Charles Warren Stoddard .

The common saying: "This is a
time of sadness." Why not gladness?

Better farther on.

The incident of life that we call
death. The two sides to death.

The endless life. The unbroken
continuity of life.

Immortality.

God.

Nature of Man.

Science.

Revelation thru Christ.

Comfort.

The teaching of Christ
Sympathy of friends.

Holy memory.

Immortality.

1- God.

2. Teachings of the world's sages,
and revelation thru Jesus Christ.

3. Law of attraction.

4. The great desire to live.

5. The unfinished life.

"She hath done what she could".

1- As a friend and neighbor

2- As a wife and mother.

Strong optimism.

Continuing courage.

Generous given

Faithful Believer.

Noble Home-maker.

Father Chadwick.

- 1- Interest in all things pertaining to human welfare.
 2. Kindness the keynote of his life.
 - 3- A man thoroly imbued with a fine ethical sense.
 - 4- A churchman devoted to clean sports.
 - 5- Achieved that good something in life that we call character.
- "Place premium on character."
-

Edw. Knight

- 1- Strong optimism.
- 2- A determined persistence in the right.
- 3- A true man, completely devoted to his church.
- 4- A home man with a heart of love.
- 5- A simple life - great in faith and faithfulness.

Not to mourn over a departed friend, but to rejoice in the triumph of a life.

Sting of death in separation.

Death a sleep.

The basis of our belief in immortality.

We do not enquire about creed, or political profession, but we do want to know if the 'life' rang true, was sincere, patient kind, possessed honor and integrity.

- 1- Intellectual strength and poise.
- 2- Grand old wisdom of sincerity.
- 3- Devoted to a cause - human rights.
- 4- Integrity - common honesty.
- 5- Home maker.

Living, vs. memory communion.
Heavenly and earthly immortality.

Mrs. Corwin.

1. A woman of great heartedness.
Genuine & wholesome.
 2. A gracious & generous friend.
 3. A believer in God & a practitioner of kindness.
 4. A gentle home-maker.
 5. An unassuming & a very helpful Church woman.
 6. A Christian, emphasizing the practical.
 7. The continuing influence, or the heritage of the earthly immortality.
-

Mrs. Abel.

1. A live interest in everything pertaining to the good in life.
2. A persistent & contagious cheerfulness.
3. A believer in & a practitioner of friendship.
4. Completely loyal to her faith & Church.
5. A helper of her fellow.
6. A noble home-maker.
7. A Christian woman.

Tho. our outward man perishes, yet
the inward man is renewed day by day.

2nd Cor. 4-16.

1. Physical wasting is ^{often} accompanied by spiritual strengthening.
 2. Spiritual strength is our greatest consolation in bereavement.
 3. The triumph over death grants us a new sense of life's values. We see the only life that is worth living.
 4. The partial emancipation of the spirit in bodily sickness leads us to bliss in the complete enfranchisement of the spirit thru death.
-

Difficulty of speaking the
appropriate word of comfort.
Conventional utterances seem icy cold.
The great problem - or vision.

Titanic. Lusitania - Battlefields of
Europe.

1. The mind of man fitted intrinsically
for a higher realm.

2. "I am" creates a basis for
believing that "I shall be." Wonder
of life - miracle of existence.

Persistence of personality.

3. Scientific doctrine that there is
no waste in the economy of God.

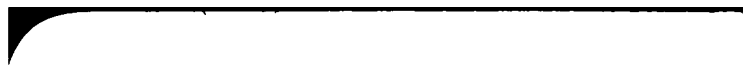
4. The quickening thru death.

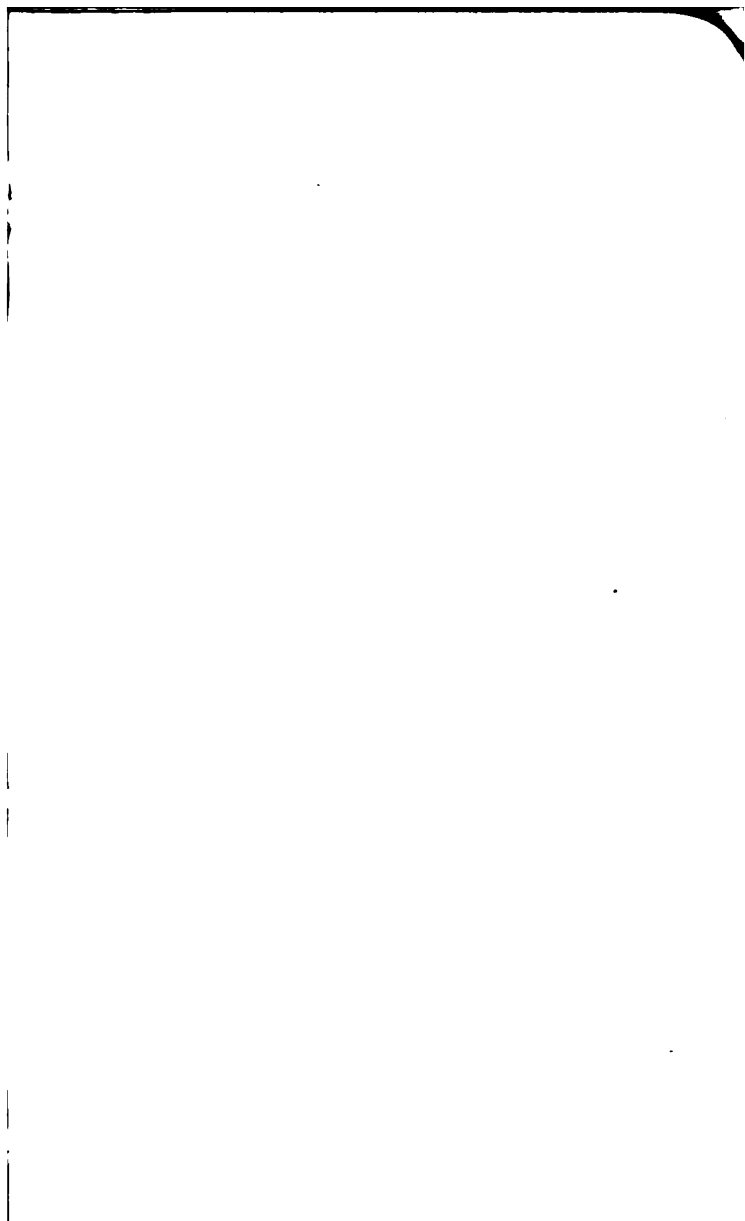
Death the door of life.

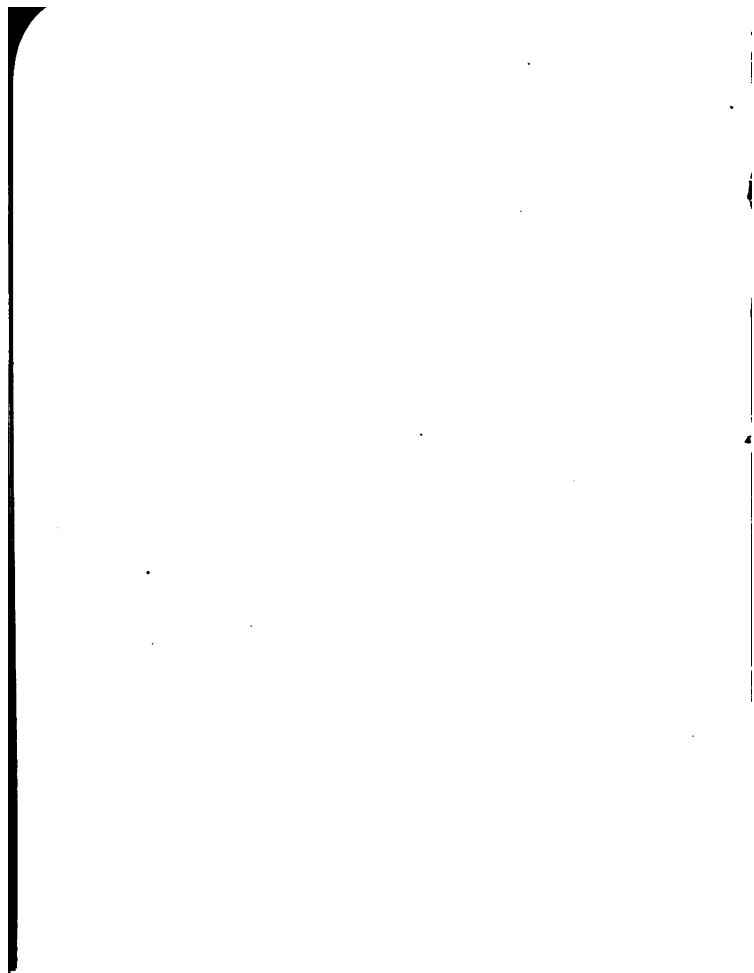
The old that passes that the new may
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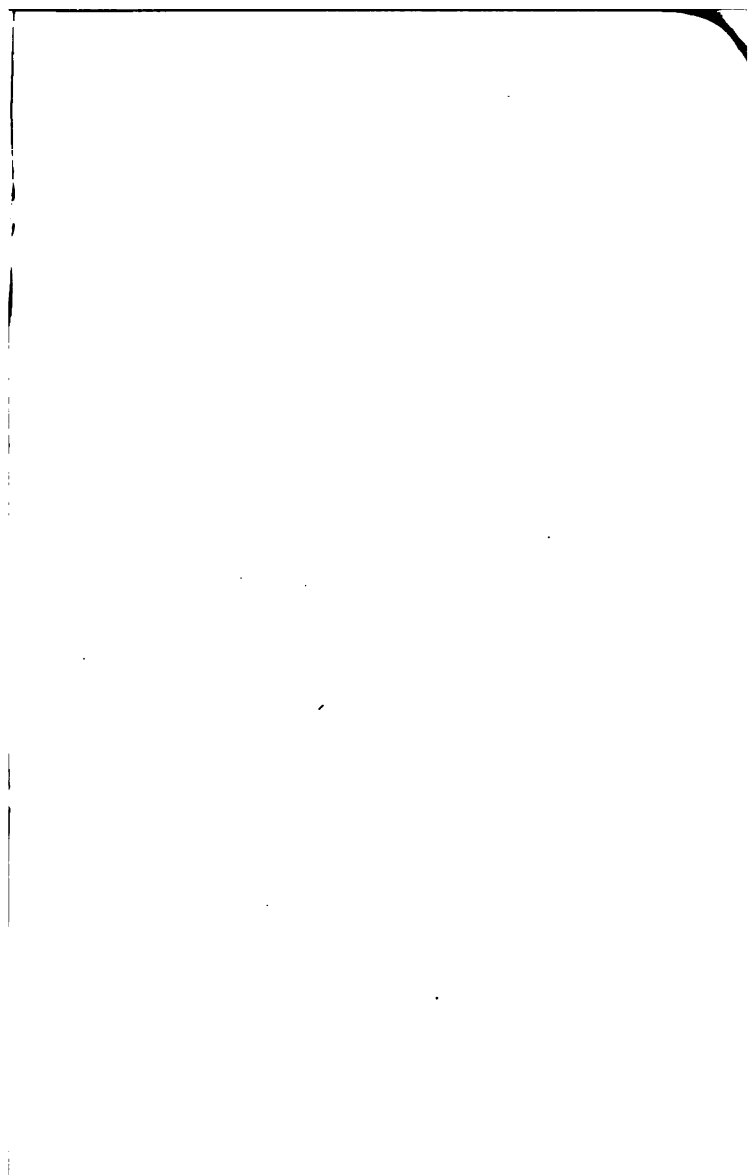
5. Immortality - for completing life.

The great adventure leading to
blessed reality.









The common saying: "This is a
time of sadness." May not gladness?

Better farther on.

The incident of life that we call
death, the two sides to death.

The endless life. The unbroken
continuity of life.

Immortality.

God.

Nature of Man.

Science.

Revelation thru Christ.

Comfort.

The teaching of Christ
Sympathy of friends.
Holy memory.

Immortality.

- 1- God.
2. Teachings of the world's sages,
and revelation thru Jesus Christ.
3. Law of attraction.
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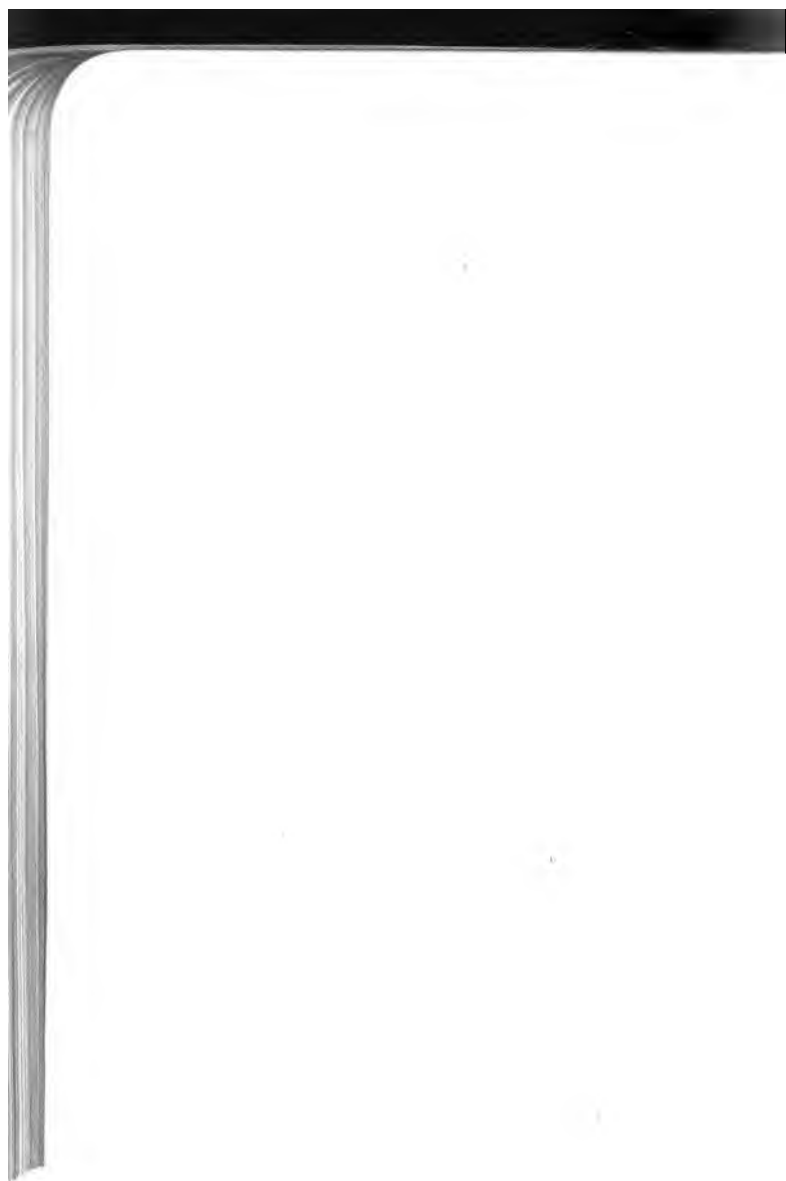
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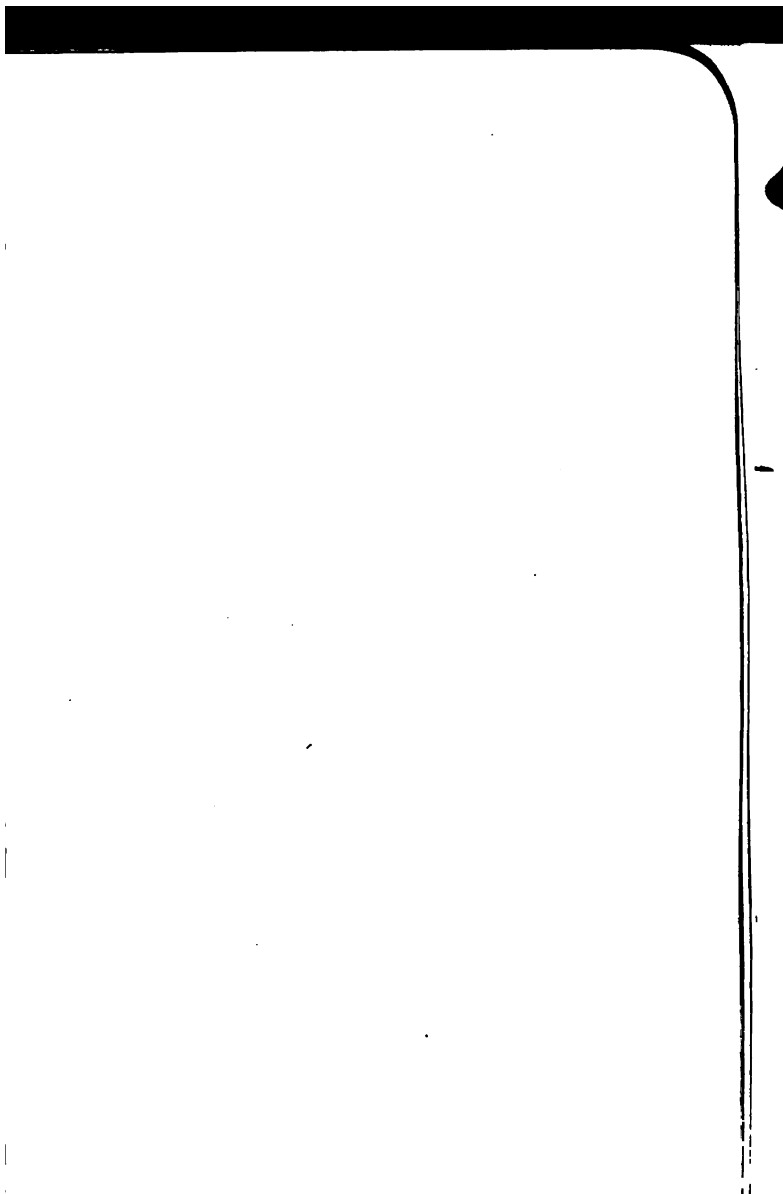
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